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MR. TARDIEU'S visit should be the herald of international action on behalf of Central Europe. Matters there have really reached a breaking-point and the only question is whether to prop up the structure which France has fostered for political reasons or to use the opportunity for a reconstruction which will benefit Germany, Italy and Bulgaria as well as the Danubian States. This may happen provided that the Four Power Conference is in a position to consider the whole scheme before a programme is drawn up. "Pertinax", on the other hand, voicing semi-official French opinion, says that "Mr. MacDonald does not seem to realise that a Franco-British entente is the only possible means of saving the Danube States from financial disaster." Why a Franco-British entente? Ententes between two Powers on the eve of a Four Power Conference rouse unpleasant associations. Mr. MacDonald, we hope, will find co-operation possible without special friendships which imply special enmities.

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Shanghai remains in a precarious state of "truce." The Japanese will not withdraw their forces farther than a point which gives them control of the left bank of the River Whangpoo. The Chinese, naturally enough, object to remaining outside the 20 kilometre zone demanded by the Japanese. So the mere positions of the armies have been regulated and the policing of the no-man's-land effected by a "truce," pending further negotiations. The Manchurian puppet Government has declared its aims—"to be independent of all control, except Japanese advice," in the pleasant phrase of the *Times* correspondent. This Japanese "advice" is being continuously given by an army of occupation and by new police; the customs revenues have already been seized there; and only "a contribution" is to be "made to the liquidation of China's foreign loans." The extent of that contribution will also doubtless be decided on Japanese "advice." Meanwhile the Secretary-General of the League circulated this week an imposing list of officials and institutions consulted by the peripatetic Lytton Commission, which states that the Commission hopes to arrive in Pekin at the end of next week, and in Manchuria the third week of April. The Japanese War Minister now declares that Japan's policy must not be interfered with either by the League or by the Powers, and that if the Commission's Report shows "a misunderstanding of the position," Japan should retire from the League. The League may then be confronted with the choice of losing Japan or losing any reputation it still has by sanctioning the rape of Manchuria.

* * *

The world grows each week a little madder. The latest insanity is the rush of Americans to sell dollars and buy pounds sterling for fear lest the United States —with her bank vaults still stuffed full of gold—may be driven off the gold standard. Of course, there is more than that in the present incipient "flight from the dollar." The United States Congress still refuses to agree to any plan by which the Budget can be balanced, and a huge deficit to be financed by short-term borrowing now seems certain. The abandonment of the gold standard by other countries has hit American exports, and there are no results yet to hand from the ground plans of "reflation" that are being launched. Prices are still falling, and the general economic outlook in America is still fully as bad as ever. But the United States has still fifteen hundred million dollars of free gold above the minimum reserve. That she can be forced off the gold standard by loss of gold is a fantastic idea for the present. She might, of course, be forced off it by reflation in the long run, unless her influence were powerful enough to raise gold prices. But that is another story; and if reflation seemed likely to succeed in reviving trade money would be likelier to stay in America than to run away. The present movement merely illustrates the extreme touchiness of the floating uninvested balances that are at present wandering round the world's money markets without a permanent home. This money is bad money; and the less of it we have the better we shall be pleased. At present the Bank of England is hard put to it to stop the £ soaring back to something like parity.

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Extremely valuable debates are occasionally staged in the House of Lords. The debate over East Africa last week was one of the frankest and best discussions of the native land problem that has ever taken place. Lord Olivier's condemnation of a system which denies any rights of ownership to any native in his own country was supported more cautiously but not with less weight by Lord Lugard. What possible relation of "trust" can exist while Lord Sumner's famous legal judgment still remains good law? "Whoever," he said, "now owns the unalienated lands, the natives do not." In other words, the white man entered these countries, and brought with him his own law according to which all the land belonged to him. A bitter complaint of particular injustices in the sequestration of land occupied by natives has recently been sent to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of the Kikuyu tribe in Kenya and no doubt these complaints will be investigated by the new Commission which is to be appointed to inquire into the land problem. The essential thing if we do not desire those whom we rule over as "trustees" to regard us as fraudulent trustees, is to give them legal security in what is after all in justice, if not in law, their country.

* * *

The Independent Labour Party is in two minds and a real difficulty. On the one hand, it cannot screw up its courage—or unscrew its wits—to the point of definitely seceding from the Labour Party, and attempting to build up a nation-wide electoral machine of its own. On the other, it is not prepared to surrender its hereditary office of keeper of the Labour Party's Socialist conscience. Mr. Maxton and a considerable minority of the membership favour secession, while at the opposite extreme a smaller group wants continued affiliation to the Labour Party without conditions. Between these two is a strong middle group which advocates affiliation only if the Labour Party is prepared to give I.L.P. Members of Parliament freedom to vote as the I.L.P., rather than the less Socialist Parliamentary Labour Party, directs them. At the I.L.P. Conference last week-end, this middle group for the moment got its way, but as the conditions on which the I.L.P. is to insist have been left undefined, and the willingness of the Labour Party to accept any conditions is unknown, the entire controversy will have to be fought out again in the very near future. The Conference last week-end, in effect, settled nothing. It only made plain the deep divisions which exist within the I.L.P., and the extreme difficulty either of finding an agreed formula of reconciliation or of going out to create a rival party prepared to fight official Labour at the next General Election.

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A part of the difficulty of secession is, of course, that if the I.L.P. leaves the Labour Party, it thereby forfeits the support of the Trade Unions, and commits itself to founding a new electoral party financed out of the subscriptions of its individual members. But this is not the only obstacle. An even greater is that of explaining the real differences of policy on which the split is to be made. While the late Labour Government was in office Mr. Maxton and his friends might be able to expound the differences between its "gradualism" and their policy of "Socialism in Our Time." But is the Labour Party to-day any longer "gradualist"? Its policy is in the melting-pot, and its future form unknown. The I.L.P., if it decides to secede, might find itself advocating almost exactly the same policy as the body it has set out to fight. At any rate, the differences are not at present nearly clear-cut enough to justify the existence of two parties appealing largely to the same type of electors. If the I.L.P. leaves the Labour Party, and the Labour Party then moves to the left, as it seems likely to do, it will be the I.L.P. that will go under. But if it remains, it has undoubtedly a case, though it has usually put this case badly, for demanding either a revision in the Labour Party's Standing Orders or the adoption of a more definitely Socialist policy. The mistake of the I.L.P. in the past has been in concentrating on the first of these two alternatives, instead of intensifying its pressure for the second. Unless it works itself, under Mr. Maxton's leadership, into a false strategic position, it has now a real opportunity of guiding Labour Party policy into more definite Socialist channels. That course it ought to take, instead of courting a fiasco like that of Sir Oswald Mosley. For the fate of secessionists is hard, and Labour policy just now is in a highly fluid and adaptable state.

* * *

While the I.L.P. is debating whether to break away, the Labour Party in Holland has undergone a definite split. Four hundred out of two thousand delegates to its Annual Conference have seceded, and formed a new Left Wing party. This movement is of international, as well as national, importance, because its leader is Mr. Edo Fimmen, of the International Transport Workers' Federation, who is one of the best-known and influential Trade Unionists in Europe. Mr. Fimmen has long been known as a "Left Winger," and a strong advocate of international Trade Union action; and he quarrelled some years ago with the International Federation of Trade Unions because it was too moderate and unconstructive for his liking. He appears to have the support of no more than a minority among the Dutch Socialists; but the split in Holland, under his leadership, will serve further to weaken the Labour and Socialist International, to which the British Labour Party belongs, and to reinforce those elements in Europe which are striving for a policy midway between Russian Communism and orthodox Social Democracy. Mr. Maxton will doubtless feel disposed to shake hands with Mr. Fimmen, and congratulate his followers on having more courage than the British I.L.P.

* * *

It is early yet to discover what consequences (if any) will follow Mr. Lloyd George's elaborately staged "come-back"; but it is quite certain that in condemning the adhesion of Sir Herbert Samuel, and other Liberal "leaders," to a Protectionist and reactionary Government, he is voicing the opinion of the majority of thinking Liberals. Sir Herbert's closely argued and, without doubt, wholly sincere defence of his attitude has failed to carry conviction. It is idle to argue that the work of the "National" Government is not yet complete, since its "National" character has already been destroyed; while Sir Herbert's belief that his presence, and that of his Free Trade colleagues, operates as a moderating influence in a Government which has already saddled us with a very elaborate and dangerous tariff system is really a very odd delusion. The continued presence of the Liberal ministers, in fact, serves a double purpose—it enables the Tory caucus to distribute the responsibility for the more objectionable of their measures, even while they are steadily effecting the disruption of the Liberal Party. Already the most energetic and far-seeing of its rank and file look upon themselves as an army without leaders. They are faced with a situation comparable to that of the mediæval Church when the Pope was incarcerated at Avignon. The National Liberal Federation shortly holds its annual meeting and, representing as it does the Old Guard of Liberalism, may offer a tepid endorsement of Pope Herbert's attitude (or should we call him Pope Innocent?). Even so, the appearance in the field of one or more anti-Popes cannot now be long delayed.

* * *

The teachers, at their various Easter Conferences, naturally spent a good deal of their time explaining to one another and to the public that they have an unanswerable case for the restoration of the ten per cent. by which their salaries were cut down last autumn. So they have, an absolutely unanswerable case. For it was explained to them over and over again that they were asked to submit to the reduction only because of the grave national emergency, seen in the unbalanced state of the Budget and the panic flight from the pound. Where is that emergency now? We have a Budget surplus in prospect, and talk of reducing direct taxation is in the air. So far from flying from the pound, the world seems determined to force up the value of sterling to an embarrassing extent. It is now plain to everybody that the arguments on the strength of which the teachers' salaries were cut were mainly bunkum. But are the teachers likely to get their money back? Hardly likelier than the country is to return to Free Trade with the present Parliament in being. For, if the teachers got their ten per cent. restored, plenty of others would come running for a like concession—Civil Servants, Army, Navy, dockers—every group that has had its pay cut down. Very good, too, we should say; for we were against the whole policy of reducing wages. But we hardly expect the National Government to see matters in the same light. For a reduction in the working-class standard of living was, after all, one of the objects of forming a National Government.

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Before Parliament rose, one hundred and ninety-five Members of Parliament petitioned the Prime Minister to give facilities for the Coupon Trading Bill. This Bill, which stands in the name of Lt.-Col. Moore Brabazon, has been before the House for some time, but has been, and no doubt will continue to be, scientifically obstructed. It represents the battleground of powerful contending interests. The object of the Bill is to render coupon trading illegal—to deprive the smoker of various popular brands of cigarettes of electric irons, art-silk stockings, and ornamental hairbrushes which reward the consumption of a sufficient quantity of nicotine. Coupon trading and "gift schemes" are already illegal in many countries. The demand for their abolition comes partly from retail traders, whose wares are largely undercut by the "gifts"; partly from manufacturing combines which are not themselves *dona ferentes*. Opposition to the Bill is largely focused in the Co-operative movement, which does not favour the restriction within narrow limits of the conditions within which trading is permissible. Quite probably, as a result of the memorial to the Prime Minister, a Select Committee will now be appointed to go into the whole question.

* * *

Sir Horace Plunkett was known to an extraordinary number and variety of persons in almost every country. For forty years in season and out of season he taught his gospel of co-operation on the land. "That doctrinaire dairyman!" is the exclamation of one of Mr. Britling's acquaintances when the suggestion is made that the country should be handed over to Sir Horace in an early crisis of the war. Sir Horace himself approved of Mr. Wells's phrase. He was proud of being a doctrinaire, if doctrinaire meant that he persistently stuck to the same text and converted more and more people to a saner way of thinking. His certainty was that of the prophet rather than that of the schoolmaster, and he had a great capacity for repeating his message without repeating himself. Among his numerous public services his work for co-operation in Ireland took first place and remained his most absorbing occupation. The last years of his working life were centred in the Foundation which bears his name and which should prove his most permanent memorial.

A FRENCH EUROPE?

EVEN if we had not the indiscretions of "Pertinax" and other reliable interpreters of French policy to guide us, we should not be in any doubt about the real object of M. Tardieu's visit to this country. French policy is not ambiguous or hesitating like the foreign policy of Great Britain. It is a whole policy, clear, militant and consistently pursued. From the Treaty of Versailles to the struggle over the Austro-German Customs Union last year and the present proposals for a Danubian Federation according to a French pattern, the objects pursued both by treaty arrangements and by financial loans have never varied. No month passes without some fresh move by the Quai D'Orsay to rivet the Versailles settlement more firmly upon Europe, to ensure the continued subjugation of Germany and achieve as far as possible the ancient dream of a French hegemony over Europe. The Quai D'Orsay works while others sleep.

The present French proposals are to use the economic collapse of Central Europe to create, under the effective control of France and with the help of British capital, a new unit which will not only serve as a bulwark against Russia but which will also keep Germany isolated from her Danubian neighbours. If it should prove possible to tie up Great Britain and perhaps the United States financially in such a scheme, it would be impossible for those Powers to take a disinterested attitude in regard to German policy in the future. The Little Entente—Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Jugoslavia—whose existence depends on French money, will be enlarged by the inclusion into a system of customs preferences of Austria and Hungary, both of which are bankrupt—so bankrupt indeed that the League has again recommended a new loan for Austria merely to pay off old debts, and has just decided that to sink further capital into Hungary, without what it calls a return to normal economic conditions, is to throw good money after bad. Complete cessation of trade is so imminent that something in any case must be done.

The reasons for French haste are clear enough. France has acted as midwife and wet nurse to the Little Entente: French capital is deeply involved and to permit complete collapse in Central Europe is too great a risk. Moreover Germany, baulked by France last year of the hope of forcing a Customs Union with Austria, is on the point of completing an arrangement for preferential tariffs with the Little Entente Powers, and Italy has already completed such arrangements. Thus from the French point of view there is real danger that the pressure of economic circumstances will force the Danubian States to lower their tariffs all round and will introduce some real economic sanity into the relations of all the interested Powers, including Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. Bulgaria, which has demanded to be allowed to enter the Federation, the French might tolerate in the system. But one of the keystones of French policy will have gone if Germany is allowed to make a closer *rapprochement* with Austria, Hungary or the Little Entente. Everyone agrees now that the Balkanisation of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire deliberately achieved by the Peace Treaties was a fatal policy and that a Danubian Federation of some sort is essential. But the French concern is to make that federation conform to the French pattern—one which precludes Germany from any share of its benefits.

Now in order to bring about this coup, the surest method was to win Great Britain's concurrence before the project was laid before Germany and Italy. The Paris press assumed that this had been satisfactorily accomplished when Sir John Simon and M. Tardieu discussed the proposal at Geneva, and M. Beneš, who was present at these discussions, has confirmed their view by saying, in his speech of March 22nd, that the British Government showed itself in these conversations on the whole "in agreement with the French initiative." Naturally, therefore, there was an uproar in the French press when Mr. MacDonald, who does really understand something of foreign affairs, declared that Great Britain could agree to nothing except at a real Conference which would include Germany and Italy. There is still apparent in France a hope that M. Tardieu, by coming to this country before the Four Power Conference, may succeed in completing an agreement between Great Britain and France without Germany and Italy. But on this Mr. MacDonald is likely to prove tougher than Sir John Simon. He has English opinion solidly behind him. The City is well aware of the economic dangers of the French proposals and is unlikely to support a scheme which is as unsound financially as it is bad politically. And one of the few things that the British public is sure of in the realm of foreign affairs is that to support the French effort to keep Germany permanently in chains is the surest way to bring another war closer.

As an economic proposition any proposal to unite the Danubian States to the exclusion of Germany is foolish. A Customs Union of the Danubian States is, as M. Beneš says, impossible. These individual States have developed, indeed over-developed, their productive capacities with the help of foreign money and tariff walls. Britain and the United States have provided the major portion of foreign capital for Austria and Hungary; and any scheme to subordinate the interests of these two countries to that of French capital in the three countries of the Little Entente must from the first be suspect. In this matter, therefore, American interests must also be considered, especially if, having secured a British entente before the Four-Power Conference, France means to invite the investment of American funds. But the central problem is clearly that of the inclusion of Germany.

German trade is essential to the whole of Central Europe, and no real reconstruction of Central Europe is possible unless Germany is an integral part of the scheme. Clearly Great Britain could not even consider financing—and France is seeking financial as well as "moral" and diplomatic support from this country for her scheme—a proposition which is based on such rotten economic and moral foundations. But something must be done if the two economically moribund patients, Austria and Hungary, are not to be allowed to pass from the moratorium to the mortuary. Mr. MacDonald, therefore, has a great opportunity—perhaps the greatest of his career. It will not be easy for France to withdraw altogether from a proposed which was

originally sponsored by her, and it should not pass the bounds of diplomatic capacity to convert this French scheme into a genuine plan for the reconstruction of Central Europe. The essential thing is that France should be left under no misapprehension of this country's intention. Great Britain is as ready as Germany and Italy are to assist, even at the expense of loans and most favoured nation treaties, to do all that lies in her power to set bankrupt Europe on its feet. But it must be for the good of Europe as a whole Europe, not a new combination to suit French political ambitions.

IRELAND AND ENGLAND

From a Correspondent

IRELAND once more is tangling the heart strings of the Empire. Ministers are less concerned with what is done or said in Dublin than with the spasms which sympathy or reaction may induce in Delhi, Ottawa and Pretoria. The press is overclouded and hazy with an atmosphere of self-conscious momentousness. Thus there is room for an appraisement of the situation in terms of political realism.

Mr. de Valera's accession to power signalled the probable imminence of a crisis. Somebody—whether in the Cabinet or merely an associate of Ministers—wished the crisis to be precipitated before Easter. Mr. de Valera's announcements of policy left much to be desired by those public mentors who wished to make our flesh creep. It is an open secret that Mr. Thomas was importunate in his inquiries for more at the Free State High Commissioner's Office, and on receiving a mere oral confirmation of Mr. de Valera's published words made melodrama in the House about a "document" which had just been handed to him. His histrionics, however, were almost immediately submerged in the sobriety with which the Cabinet and Mr. Chamberlain handled the affair. Thus no electric discharge was induced from the cloud masses on either side. Experienced observers are wondering who was disappointed.

Responsible critics quickly realised that Mr. de Valera had not obliged with a declaration of a one-sided abrogation of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December, 1921. Speaking as President of the Executive Council, he has done no more—so far at least—than declare that he will honour his election pledges to eliminate the oath from the Constitution and withhold the Land Purchase annuities. He coupled with this declaration of policy an expression of his desire to maintain entirely friendly relations with Britain. Quite clearly, so far as the terms of his declaration are concerned, he based his claim to do these things upon contractual or constitutional right and as in no way involving any violation of the Treaty. If there were any ambiguity about this it would be dissolved by his added announcement that he is going to demand back some thirty millions or so in respect of annuities already paid by the Free State during Mr. Cosgrave's tenure of office. Now, whether the Oath is obligatory or not under the terms of the Treaty is a matter of construing the terms of the Treaty; and as it contains no express provision that an Oath is to be imposed a weighty argument can be propounded in favour of Mr. de Valera's contention. Again, the Treaty has no relevance to the Land Purchase annuities. The Treaty, which I at least regard as a binding document, was an agreement negotiated and signed by plenipotentiaries and solemnly ratified as a national contract by the respective legislatures of Great Britain and the Irish Free State. But the Treaty merely provided (Section V) for a financial adjustment between the two countries. There was a subsequent agreement dated December, 1925, which was also ratified, dealing with that financial adjustment and other provisions implementing or revising the Treaty. Here again the annuities were not expressly dealt with. Britain's claim to them now is based upon a subsequent agreement made by Mr. Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Blythe as Minister of Finance, dated March 19th, 1926, and entitled "Heads of Ultimate Financial Agreement between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State." This document embodied an inter-departmental agreement, but it was never ratified by the two Governments as an international contract ancillary to the Treaty. The matters treated in it are in consequence, apparently, susceptible of being re-opened for cause shown. And there is an arguable case on the merits.

Thus Mr. de Valera has so far failed to oblige those who desired international melodrama. He has shunned the precedent of Bethmann-Hollweg tearing up the "scrap of paper" and challenging war. There is no rupture of normal relations, no cause for handing the High Commissioner his passports, no occasion for a naval blockade or an economic boycott. And is not that all to the good in everybody's interest? There will unquestionably be divergence of view and of interest as between Westminster and Dublin. There may be argument, protest, negotiation—possibly arbitration . . . Nay, more. Supposing that Mr. de Valera's ideals or the exigencies of his domestic situation bring him into collision with certain provisions, indisputable provisions, of the Treaty. Supposing, in that event, that he claims—once more let us take a German precedent to illustrate the argument—revision of the Treaty which has already been once formally revised. What then? If the "imposed" Treaty of Versailles can be revised as to frontiers and financial burdens, and if Mr. de Valera claims revision of the Anglo-Irish Treaty which he alleges was "imposed" in December, 1921, can those that back Germany's claim for revision to-day turn to-morrow to urge war, military, economic or administrative on the Irish Free State for advancing a similar claim? And as Mr. de Valera finds the Treaty in existence *de facto* and regulating the whole corpus of external and internal administrative routine, what wisdom or convenience or policy would there be in abrogating it rather than in seeking for its revision?

Yet sovereign independence and the Republican creed are dear to many hearts in Ireland. That is an inevitable reaction of the failure of the formula, "Ulster to accept Ireland and Ireland to accept the Empire," which was to avert Partition. Yet there is in this no cause for war unless rein is given to the small group of malignant mischief-makers which yet exists on either side. All responsible opinion, all practical statesmanship should unite for its suppression.

There are many who will grieve and not a few who bitterly resent that Britain's constitutional and political hold over Ireland is proving insubstantial. Those who know the past know the causes of the present. It is to be hoped that neither the grief nor the resentment will lead to measures of economic retaliation. For that way madness lies. It is profitable for Britain that Ireland should be prosperous, just as Ireland would suffer from an impoverishment of Britain. In the economic liaison of a common and neighbourly prosperity Britain may regain much that she has lost in the constitutional sphere. On the other hand an economic retaliation on Ireland could not fail of repercussions throughout the Empire and in the U.S.A. wherever the Irish race has influence—repercussions political as well as economic.

Let it be remembered that while Britain buys vast quantities of Irish produce the Irish Free State buys considerably larger quantities of British exports. This adverse balance (to Ireland) is liquidated by the income on Irish investments in Britain to the amount of from £150 millions to £200 millions. These investments are in large part trust funds over which Dail Eireann has legislative control. This is enough to indicate that a covert economic struggle between Britain and Ireland would necessarily be attended with most painful and embarrassing consequences to both sides.

A LONDON DIARY

THE *Times* and the Conservative press generally have done their best to give the impression that Sir John Simon has been a great success as Foreign Secretary. I think that that myth is now finally exploded. The divergence between Sir John and Mr. MacDonald on the French idea of making a strong central European *bloc* supported by England as well as by France, and leaving out Germany and Italy, is no longer a secret. How far Sir John was really a "dupe" I would not like to say, but the French press seems to have been generally justified in claiming him as a supporter of a French Europe, and Mr. MacDonald's insistence that Germany and Italy should come into the Conference before the programme is decided amounts to a severe reverse for Sir John. With the possible exception of Sir Austen Chamberlain, no British Foreign Secretary has ever been so easily "nobbled" by the Quai d'Orsay.

* * *

At Geneva, where success is nowadays considered necessary for our diplomatic prima donnas, his reputation is, to put it mildly, not high. People who had some opportunity of seeing his performance at close quarters and occasionally from the wings are not, I find, in private, enthusiastic about it. Verbal discretion in the lobbies is as important as it is in the Council at Geneva, and I understand that our Foreign Secretary might perhaps have been more careful in this respect to avoid encouraging Japanese intransigence. In the Council itself, from the internationalist point of view and as an upholder of the obligations under the Covenant, he cut a poor figure. In the view of many observers of different nationalities and varying opinions, the failure of the Council to induce Japan to comply with her obligations and to obtain a settlement, was largely due to the attitude of Great Britain and her representative.* It looks as if Sir John Simon is again following in the footsteps of Sir Austen Chamberlain, whose attitude towards the League seemed to be that of Pericles towards women, namely, that the less that was heard of it, either for good or evil, the better, and, that while internationalism and arbitration treaties might be useful for foreigners and dagoes, the British Empire was so immaculate and above suspicion that all it required was a strong navy. For these services to the cause of peace Sir Austen was given the Garter; if Sir John goes on as he has begun I daresay he will win the same decoration.

* * *

I am appalled at the cult of the second-rate or tenth-rate which every year seems to become more and more a cherished national characteristic. I spend a great deal of my time in a London square, one of those typical London squares, not of outstanding architectural beauty, but built a hundred years and more ago by men with some consciousness of beauty and human decency and dignity. Recently a large block of houses on two sides have been pulled down and two gigantic red brick buildings inserted in the gaps. I do not complain of that, for towns must grow from century to century and the dead must make way for the living. But in no period of English history, not even in the worst days of Victorianism, could you see in architecture the cult of the second-rate flaunted as it is in these buildings. One is pretentiously tenth-rate; the other is without form or meaning, with a gigantic façade of such silliness that a local suburban builder might even have been ashamed of imparting it to a four-roomed villa. This cult of the second-rate permeates everything. London is probably the only great city in the world in which for the greater part of the year the ordinary person of moderate means cannot see a first-rate play or opera. The B.B.C. at one moment looked as if it might maintain some standards; it even gave the man in the street every other evening for about an hour the chance of learning the difference between first-rate and tenth-rate music. But that danger is past, and those responsible for the programmes see to it that a great piece of music by a great composer is now rarely included.

* * *

Here is an illuminating example of the difficulties which sometimes beset the British administrator in our Crown Colonies. In the Courts of one of these a white man some time ago was found guilty of murder. He had shipped on board a boat and then obtained possession of it by the simple method of inducing the cabin boy to help him to murder the skipper and the rest of the crew. The bodies were thrown overboard, but the murderer was eventually caught, tried, and found guilty. The judge apparently held that a murderer could not be sentenced to death unless the bodies of his victims had been forthcoming, and the accused was sentenced to penal servitude for life. In that Colony no white man had ever before been sentenced to imprisonment, and it was discovered that the prison was not suitable for the detention of Europeans. The jail had a front door and a front, but no back. In order to carry out the sentence a brand new prison would have to be built and at least two natives engaged as warders for the rest of the accused's life. This would be a serious drain on the Colony's finances. Eventually the Governor arranged with Australia to take the man into one of their prisons, and all seemed well. Alas, some time afterwards the Australian authorities informed the Governor that the man was such an intolerable nuisance in their jail that he must take him back. The Governor was again in his quandary. He solved it by pardoning the man on condition that he returned to his own country (he was not a British subject). The prison still has a front, but no back.

* * *

The issues which Mr. Godfrey Elton very ably discusses in his pamphlet, *Towards the New Labour Party* (Cape, 1s.), have been the subject of plenty of recent controversy in these pages. As I read Mr. Malcolm MacDonald's very forcible introduction and Mr. Elton's denunciation of the Trade Union influence on the Labour Party, I wonder if they are not omitting one of the most important elements: I mean the social or society corruption of some Labour leaders. I have never seen this better discussed than in Mr. Garratt's book, *Mugwumps and the Labour Party* (Hogarth Press, 5s.). For many months before the break it was common talk that just those Ministers who in the event went "National" had learnt to dislike their colleagues, especially their horny-handed colleagues. As Lord Passfield put it, the English aristocracy does not bribe Labour leaders; it "embraces" them. These Ministers would in any case have lost their influence in the Labour ranks by appearing so often in the society columns of the *Morning Post*, by spending their week-ends in aristocratic houses, or their Saturdays hunting with Society hounds.

* * *

A friend in the United States writes to tell me that the latest Hoover slogan for the Presidential election is: "Don't change toboggans on the slide!" Now that the flight from the dollar has begun, a good substitute might be "Don't change parachutes on the drop!" CRITIC.

HOBBIES

A HOBBIES Exhibition was opened in London during the week, and a few days before this Sir Humphry Rolleston was urging us all to cultivate hobbies in time as a means of making life worth living in our old age. A hobby apparently is almost any occupation that brings you in no money. Thus the exhibits at the Hobbies Exhibition include needlework, cooking, bookbinding, posters, and short stories. Obviously short-story writing cannot be called a hobby when Mr. Kipling or Mr. Wodehouse engages in it; but it might conceivably be a hobby of Lord Lonsdale's or Dean Inge's. Hence we may conclude that one man's work is another man's hobby. Football, for example, is a hobby if you play for the Corinthians, but a profession if you play for Arsenal. On reading about the Exhibition, I began to wonder whether I myself had any hobbies—hobbies to which I had remained faithful, year in, year out, over a long stretch of time. I find it difficult to name one. The first short-lived hobby I can remember is crochet-work. As a child I never saw a nurse or female relation plying that prestidigitatory white needle and nipping wool through wool with lightning swiftness till some recognisable garment was created—I never saw this without an eager longing to be initiated into such juggling. It was as though something in my soul cried: "I too will something make, and joy in the making." I learned the beginnings of the art, and fumbled at it till I realised that no further progress was to be hoped for and was content to resign from it as from a mystery known only to women. The fascination of knitting-needles darting about as though at strife with each other was even greater; but the mystery was greater still, and I should as soon have thought of attempting to read the theological tomes in my father's study as of setting out to master the intricacies of knitting.

Collecting stamps was the first real hobby that I pursued with some hope of being a success at it. Granted patience, one could aspire in time to possess all but the rarest specimens. The world of postage stamps was then a comparatively small place, and one could dream without folly of collecting most of the stamps that had been issued. Even here, however, I lacked persistence. I did not think that I could ever lose my love of Guatemala, but none the less it faded. I could have sworn that I would never become indifferent to the swan of Western Australia, but that swan has been nothing to me for nearly two-score years. There was a time when I could have said, and have believed that I was speaking the truth, that you would find "Montserrat" written on my heart when I died, but I care as little for Montserrat to-day as for liquorice alphabets, Ecuador, Barbados, Egypt, the ever-beloved Cape of Good Hope—so far as I am concerned they are all vanished into thin air. It is nearly four-fifths of a life-time since my heart quickened at the mention of Gambia. How the change came I know not, but a passion suddenly went out like a straw fire.

Gardening, I think, succeeded it. I had an uncle who was a mighty gardener, and he infected me. He had a large garden in the country, however, whereas we had only a small grass-plot in town. My passion lasted long enough, however, for me to ruin that grass-plot—temporarily, at least. I dug at it fiercely with a spade, and thrust raspberry shoots into its mutilated bosom. The plants were from an ancient stock that had been barren for generations—generations, not of mankind, but of raspberries—and no raspberry ever grew on them under my care. Throughout the spring and summer they gave my ill-dug patch the appearance of a waste land doomed to perpetual sterility. Undaunted, however, I dug into the soil of other parts of the garden and created flower-beds which my relations complained looked like infants' graves. They, too, added to the gloom of the place, though I scattered the seeds of nemophila, candytuft, alyssum, and nasturtium liberally beneath the surface of the uneven earth. Seldom did I go into the town without making for the horticultural shop near the Albert Memorial and purchasing some of those tiny parcels of dreams that contain flower-seeds within, and bear on their faces the picture of the perfect flowers into which those seeds will one day grow. I fear I have not the sowing hand, however, for the flowers that grew in my beds were few and those few were as shabby as weeds.

I abandoned this hobby, after a professional gardener had been called in to put the garden to rights. But I sometimes wonder whether my passion for gardening is not dormant rather than dead. During the war, when every stay-at-home had a spade, I dug with the old enthusiasm, and assisted in the partial sterilisation of a considerable patch of garden by bringing the subsoil too successfully to the surface. Still, I did experience the delight of eating potatoes of my own growing. They were of a soapy texture, but it is only now, after the passage of years, that I would admit this. Those were days in which I could almost admire a vegetable-marrow, merely because I had nursed it into life myself. There is nothing like gardening for ministering to human vanity. A row of runner beans seems to the gardener to bear his own signature written in noble scarlet. The early peas sing his praises, and the lettuce-bed, when he looks at it, becomes a pool of Narcissus. I have seldom known a gardener who was at heart a modest man. Even I, who was a very bad gardener, have experienced moments of elation such as ought to be the lot only of a man who has accomplished great and immortal work.

As for my other hobbies, most of them have been of even shorter duration than my stamp-collecting and my gardening. I have had brief spells as a solver of cross-word puzzles; but I have none of the singleness of purpose that goes to the making of the real artist in the solution of cross-words. For a year or two I laboured vehemently at the piano-player; and counted every hour of leisure wasted in which I was not pedalling Bach and Beethoven and Mozart out of its exquisitely willing innards. While the enthusiasm lasted, I would hear nothing good of the gramophone; but, perhaps through laziness, I sank to the gramophone, and another hobby took the old hobby's place. Then followed intervals of listening to the wireless —a passion that sweeps all before it if one is not careful. Even at the present time I occasionally find myself greedily groping through Europe for stations that I have never heard. Hilversum and Huizen, those heavenly twins that are called by each other's names, become names as sweet to me as once were Guatemala and Ecuador. Even when "Live, Laugh, and Love" comes through, I do not turn the knob, but listen in temporary rapture. Suddenly, however, I become sated. Even a talk from Zagreb could not hold me. I have lost interest in Moscow and care nothing for Ljubljama. Another hobby has vanished like smoke in the wind.

As for patience and such means of passing the time, I never could make head or tail of them. There are card games that I have enjoyed, but I never enjoyed them enough to make a hobby of them. At chess, again, I shall be a beginner all my life, as I shall at golf. If I lived in a nursery I should play these games with children, who are my equals at them, but I cannot make a hobby of any of them in a world of men.

The truth is, I am one of the few people—though many look on us as the majority—who would rather look on at a game than take part in it. If I had the time I could easily sit through a Rugby football match every Saturday during the winter, and, though county cricket has intervals of tedium unknown to Rugby football, I should feel happy enough in a seat at Lord's on any fine afternoon during the summer. Perhaps if gardening or pianola-playing involved as little effort as watching a game I should not have abandoned them so readily. I love to take part in the strenuous life, however, not personally, but by proxy; and, while I would walk a mile to avoid being energetic myself, I would walk two miles to see other people being energetic.

Still, if I had time—and, alas, no indolent man ever has time—I fancy most of it would be spent in staring at birds. I do not know why the first sight of a black redstart should seem so exciting an event as to remain in the memory of a serious and over-taxed man for ever, or why the courtship of grebes should afford him such incomparable delight. But, if I had money, I should almost certainly travel from place to place till I had seen, and seen again, every bird in these islands. And then I should probably begin all over again, and keep on doing so till either I or the birds died. That, I suppose, must be my real hobby, or would be if I had the time to indulge in it.

Y. Y.

THE PATENT MEDICINE SCANDAL

The recent action brought against the manufacturers of an "electric comb," and the recovery by the plaintiff of £500 guaranteed in the vendor's advertisement to be paid in the event of this comb failing to do what was claimed for it—to restore the original colour to hair turned grey—raises afresh the whole question of patent medicine advertising.

Nothing is more characteristic of our national cant than the publication in newspapers, whose editorial pronouncements are unctuous in their moral rectitude, of advertisements the purpose of which is—and is known by the proprietors and editors of these papers to be—the defrauding of the public. And the offence is the more inexcusable in that the victims at whom these poisoned shafts are aimed are, for the most part, the simple, the poor and the suffering. The palmist or clairvoyant who takes a couple of rooms in Bond Street, and tries to secure a little of the spare cash of people with more money than wit, is quickly pounced on by the police and subjected to fine or imprisonment; but, so long as he avoids obscenity, and does not claim to cure venereal disorders, anybody, in this country so concerned with morality that the selling of a glass of beer in the afternoon is treated as a crime, can, with impunity, invite the public to purchase from him at the highest price he thinks obtainable any concoction or appliance, accompanying his invitation with promises which he knows full well have not an atom of foundation in fact. The manufacturers and vendors of these preparations, together with those who advertise their products and the owners of the newspapers which publish the advertisements, so far from being imprisoned or fined, are not infrequently honoured with knighthoods or peerages.

Eighteen years ago a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed "to consider and inquire into the question of the sale of patent and proprietary medicines and medical appliances, and advertisements relating thereto, and to report what amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable." This Committee, after examining a large number of witnesses, including doctors, analysts, wholesale druggists and proprietors of patent medicines, issued unanimously a very full Report and made a number of eminently practical recommendations. Among other conclusions, the Committee found that there were on the market "many secret remedies making grossly exaggerated claims of efficacy; causing injury by leading sick persons to delay in securing medical treatment; professing to cure diseases incurable by medication; or essentially and deliberately fraudulent." They further stated that this class of remedies "contains none which spring from therapeutical or medical knowledge. They are put upon the market by ignorant persons, and in many cases by cunning swindlers who exploit for their own profit the apparently invincible credulity of the public." The Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions informed the Committee that "the difficulty of successfully prosecuting for any false statement with regard to the powers of a medicine is almost insuperable. The vendors of patent and proprietary medicines can practically do what they like, so long as they keep outside the bounds of gross and obvious impropriety."

In the Report are printed extracts from the advertisements of several well-known fortune-making patent "remedies." "Will cure the most severe cases of cancerous growths, tuberculosis, consumption, heart trouble and tumours," was claimed for one decoction. "A dilute solution of nitric acid, flavoured with peppermint," was advertised as being "the celebrated Remedy for the Prevention and Cure of Typhus or Low Fever, Cholera, Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Yellow Fever, Influenza, Low Spirits, Smallpox, etc." Another well-known preparation, advertised as curing tuberculous tumours, rheumatism and gout, was alleged to be a "vegetable preparation." On analysis, the chief ingredient was found to be oleate of lead, no vegetable extracts being present. These advertisements can be matched by anyone who is curious enough to glance through the columns of any issue of a large proportion of present-day newspapers, including several "national dailies" with enormous circulations:—"Disperses bodily growths without surgical operation" (February, 1932); "Will quickly end the pain and danger of kidney trouble" (February, 1932); "Relieves dropsy and bladder disorders" (February, 1932); "Affords permanent relief in cases of erysipelas, ringworm, burns poisoned wounds and abscesses" (February, 1932). Among these will be noted a number of conditions urgently calling for immediate surgical treatment, if grave danger is to be avoided.

The Select Committee's Report, as I have said, was issued eighteen years ago. What has been its effect? Six years later Dr. Addison introduced a Bill which embodied some of the Committee's most important recommendations; but this Bill, having secured a second reading in the House of Lords, where it was sponsored by Viscount Astor, had no further Parliamentary consideration, and automatically died. Last year a Bill on somewhat similar lines was introduced by Mr. Somerville Hastings, but had an even shorter run. Briefly, nothing whatever has been done in the matter. Almost alone among the civilised countries of the world England provides, amidst her ever-growing restrictions on personal liberty, an oasis of complete freedom for a group of peculiarly heartless exploiters of the poor and the distressed.

That the scandal is a crying one, and the need for action urgent, few outside the ranks of the big and little plutocrats who batten on these frauds will dispute. But the power of those interested should not be under estimated. The sum spent on the advertising of patent medicines and medical appliances in this country runs into millions of pounds a year, and the fortunes of not a few peers of the realm and other social and political "leaders" is largely dependent thereon. Yet the worst of the scandal might, if we had the will, be easily remedied. There is no need to penalise or to restrain the reputable manufacturers of honest and standardised preparations belonging to the class of harmless domestic remedies for which no fictitious curative powers are claimed. It is a public gain that certain of these commodities should be branded with the names of firms with a tradition of quality to preserve and an unblemished record of truthfulness in their advertising to sustain. These would certainly welcome protection from the degrading competition to which they are exposed, and the more debased competitors with whom they are liable to be classed by the undiscriminating. For the ignorance of the public, and its consequent credulity, the doctors are largely to blame. Presumably, because their own practice has often had so insecure a foundation in science, they have, until lately, discouraged every attempt at popular enlightenment as to the principles of hygiene and the facts of physiology. It is not surprising that ordinary people have failed to discriminate between one mystery and another.

The proper line of action is clear. It has been urged that all proprietary articles should bear on their bottles or containers a statement of their chemical composition; but it is difficult to see what guidance this would afford to a public ignorant alike of chemistry and pharmacology. The simplest and most economical reform would consist in the compulsory registration of every proprietary medicine or medical appliance, a condition of registration being the confidential divulgence to the authorised Government department (the Keeper of the Register being pledged, under heavy penalty, to preserve strict secrecy) of the full constitution of the medicine or appliance, together with the virtues claimed for it. Only if such claims bore reasonable proportion to the possibilities would registration be granted; and this privilege would immediately be forfeited if, through any instrument of publicity, claims were subsequently advanced not in accordance with those officially submitted and approved. HARRY ROBERTS.

BACK TO THE STONE AGE

I believe the best remedy for the present economic condition of the world is for each country to become as self-sufficing as possible. President de Valera: interview in *News Chronicle*, March 26th.

HEAR him! And cheer him! Once more he'll enlighten us—
Clear-sighted, hard-headed, practical man!
Sweeping aside all the problems that frighten us,
Lo, he expounds his infallible plan!
Cease we to strive for commercial efficiency,
Bother no more about people who dump—
Follow his lead and in proud self-sufficiency
Learn, like the camel, to live on our hump!

Lay up the steamers and close the emporia,
Shut all our exporting industries down:
Commerce is dead as Queen Anne, or Victoria,
Withered and slain by de Valera's frown.
Pay no attention to natural facilities:
No Irish bacon true Britons should eat;
Wheat in South Wales should have great possibilities;
Foundries and forges must rise 'midst the peat.

And—since it seems the division of labour is
Cause of all ills; the thin end of the wedge—
Surely the man who buys boots of his neighbour is
Giving to fortune too daring a pledge.
Civilised life means dependence on other men:
Roots, skins, and berries shall satisfy me,
Living in lordly disdain of my brother-men—
Back to the Stone Age with Mr. de V.!

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE TREATY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I, in reply to Dr. Maxwell Garnett in your issue of March 19th, call his attention to the main issue in the interests of the League of Nations Union?

(1) I have every sympathy with the Germans for misinterpreting Art. 231. When they came to Versailles in 1919 they were, by a most regrettable breach of international usage and courtesy, debarred from all but written intercourse with the Allies. They were loaded by the press and public opinion of Entente countries with the guilt of the war. They quite excusably misread Art. 231. It became an article of their propaganda, part of their "grievance-complex." For a dozen years it has been an article of faith. I will call this Thesis A.

By the way, does the Archbishop, I wonder, realise what cutting out Art. 231, as he advocated, would mean? It would make it impossible to exact reparations in future and unjust to have done it in the past. Not a small matter, that. Ought we not then to repay all past reparations at once?

(2) Last Autumn two distinguished Frenchmen, MM. Renouvin and Bloch, set out to heal this old sore. They sought to prove—among other things—that Art. 231 did not charge the Germans with War-Guilt. There was nothing new in this opinion (which I will call Thesis B), it was a platitude to most people who had studied the Treaty. What was new was the attempt to bring this conception before the public. What is more, it had more than individual significance. The French Government undoubtedly favoured this attempt and were thus trying to smooth away difficulties with Germany. To the German public Thesis B was new and they were (excusably enough) suspicious of French interpretations. But they discussed it with interest and might, in the end, have been converted.

(3) Any such hope failed when Archbishop Temple intervened with a sermon at Geneva about "the War-Guilt clause," etc. This was undoubtedly meant, and has been universally interpreted, as reproducing Thesis A in its old form. I got the full text of this sermon first from Germany. The harm done there was enormous. The erudite foreigners, of course, were amazed, but the German public are apt to accept an Englishman as arbiter in a dispute between them and the French. They were certain to accept the judgment of a great prelate—conspicuous for sincerity and moral fervour. Hence, Thesis B has been completely discredited in Germany, the French gesture for harmony rebuffed, and Thesis A once more reinstated, to the infinite increase of international suspicion.

(4) For some weeks, however, discussion on the subject continued in England, notably in the *Times*. Thesis B was mentioned by several people, most notably by Mr. H. Wickham Steed (*Times*, February 9th). At the end of that time the League of Nations Union published Archbishop Temple's sermon. In other words, after the Archbishop had misled Germany, the League of Nations Union is likely to mislead England about Thesis A.

(5) Now, personally, I am not dogmatic in the matter. It is, I think, very unlikely that a defeated enemy or a great religious authority will interpret Art. 231 as correctly as a man with a European reputation for knowledge of diplomatic theory and practice, like the late Sir Ernest Satow, or many other distinguished jurists. But let the public judge. Why should the League of Nations Union circulate full details as to Thesis A and suppress them as to Thesis B? That is not fair play or wise policy. If they once stir in the matter they must give both views.

It is asking perhaps too much of the League of Nations Union to circulate the views of MM. Renouvin and Bloch. But why not circulate those of Mr. Wickham Steed? He has certainly studied international politics for a longer time and at closer quarters than the Archbishop or most other people. His letter of February 9th, in the *Times*, put Thesis B much more shortly than the Archbishop puts Thesis A, yet it would be enough. It is surely a modest request to put to the Union.

(6) May I ask Dr. Maxwell Garnett the plain question, Are the League of Nations Union prepared to publish this, or a similar corrective to Thesis A, or not? If not, they are, I think, definitely misleading the public by publishing an *ex parte* statement of the case, and unfortunately the one most likely to promote international disunion and increase bitterness. Is not their publication of Thesis A alone rather hard on the French peacemakers?

I should venture to add that I have always been a supporter of the Union. I have so deep a respect for the Archbishop as to believe that he would himself prefer the course I have suggested. It is at least in harmony with that "universality of moral obligation" which his sermon enjoined upon us.

Cambridge. HAROLD TEMPERLEY.

PRISONERS' AID

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As a first offender recently discharged from Dartmoor, after serving a sentence of five years there and at Parkhurst, I have read with great interest the constructive article on "Prison" which appeared in your issue of March 19th. I can endorse every word of this, and particularly what your contributor said about the Central Association, in spite of Sir W. Grant-Wilson's defence in the correspondence columns of your last issue. My experience—naturally the only one—is rather illuminating, and agrees exactly with what I have been told by others who have been through their hands. I was given the sum of 1s. 6d. on the morning of release "for immediate requirements," and previously had received a letter stating that by complying with certain conditions (which I could not possibly fulfil without prejudicing my own efforts to make good) could, by calling on their local representative, receive "maintenance"—incidentally I have a wife and two children—at the rate of 25s. a week for one or possibly two weeks. I had had some correspondence while in prison with this Association after an interview with their visiting agent, and found their attitude to be a complete disregard of material facts and a determination to enforce compliance with a cut-and-dried routine rather than any desire to assist my own trustee-approved efforts to get started again in suitable occupation. In fairness to the *local* representative, however, I found him most sympathetic and friendly, and as helpful as his very limited powers, already referred to, allowed him to be, and I believe I have entirely removed the bad impression created by a most unfortunately worded letter of advice sent him from the London office which had naturally caused him considerable alarm. It appears they had described me as cantankerous, unreasonable, and even worse—in fact a prejudicial document of the most serious nature. I can substantiate fully the foregoing, which if anything is an exaggeration by *under*-statement. "NEW SARUM."

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have read with interest in your issue of March 26th, the letter from Sir Wemyss Grant-Wilson, Chairman of the Central Association for the assistance of ex-convicts—that is, those who have served sentences of three years and over—and your Editorial comment.

As the value of the work done by Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies is becoming more widely known and appreciated, people appear to be more inclined to assist ex-prisoners—for the aggregate sum raised by the local efforts of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies in England and Wales has increased from £8,000 in 1922 to nearly £23,000 in 1929—the latest official figures. Considering the financial stress during this period, these figures are both remarkable and encouraging, yet the need for further support is urgent, for during 1929, 26,000 discharged prisoners were assisted in various ways by aid societies. I am well aware of the excellent work done by the Central Association for the Assistance of ex-Convicts, and can support every word that Sir Wemyss Grant-Wilson has written.

One cannot undertake work such as this without becoming "enthusiastic"—for the results are remarkable. I have often noticed this when a new member, attending a Committee Meeting for the first time, has remarked, "I really never knew the great work your Society was doing."

Viscount Brentford has said that "few people realise how much the nation owes to the devoted work of the Prisoners' Aid Societies—without whose aid it would be hopeless to attempt to introduce reformative influences into prison administration."

J. HERBERT TWAMLEY,
Hon. Treasurer, Bedfordshire
Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society.

H.M. Prison, Bedford.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Some of those who are contributing to your discussion about manners, morals and what is called education at Public Schools, assure us that Mr. Raymond Mortimer's acid criticism is in many points out of date. The Public Schools have been reformed.

More than a century ago, in an article contributed to *The Edinburgh Review* in 1810, Sydney Smith wrote of the Public Schools of his day in language as contemptuous as that used by Mr. Mortimer. He spoke of every boy being "alternatively tyrant and slave"; of the power given to elder boys, which was accompanied "not unfrequently, with cruelty and caprice" of the "servile obedience" thus impressed by a system "which makes many boys very miserable," and of the submission to tyranny, that "lays the foundation of hatred, suspicion, cunning and a variety of odious passions."

In short, his indictment of the fagging and prefectorial system is of a bitterness that makes Mr. Mortimer's sound amiably polite. About the "ridiculous stress" laid upon games he is just as severe, and he draws up a copious and instructive list, haphazard, of a host of famous Englishmen who have brilliantly distinguished themselves in every kind of work without the benefits of a Public School education and of the soul-stifling discipline which wastes youthful years in failing to learn Greek and Latin.

"A Public School commonly leaves the idle almost as idle, and the dull as dull, as it finds them." Some think that it does better, and that "the grand old fortifying classical curriculum" makes the industrious as idle as they dare to be, and stupefies the intelligent into dullness.

But now, we hear, it is all reformed. It was flourishing in 1810. It was going strong when Mr. Mortimer was at school. It has been changed at some date, unmentioned, since. This I cannot believe.

But one thing, certainly, *has* changed. That is the "school patriotism" of boys. In my youth, it was etiquette to pretend to like one's Public School. Nowadays the majority of boys appear to despise theirs and they have no shame in saying so.

That may mean further and more noticeable reform before A.D. 2010. RICHARD JENNINGS.

8 The Grove, Boltons, S.W.10.

SUGAR BEET

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Without entering into the detailed technical controversy raised by Mr. Lancaster Smith in his letter of March 26th, it is interesting to note from figures quoted by Sir John Gilmour recently in the House of Commons that the total assistance received by the sugar-beet factories since the inception of the subsidy scheme, in subsidy and duty preference, has amounted to £27,295,000. The amount of sugar produced from British beet over this period is 1,318,052 tons. This amount of sugar can be bought in world markets to-day for approximately £8 millions. If this had been done, the £20 millions remaining could have been distributed to the farmers as a present pure and simple without their having incurred any of these extravagant "costs of production" referred to by Mr. Lancaster Smith.

These figures will show the economic unsoundness of the whole sugar-beet scheme, and this unsoundness is only further emphasised by the fact that efficient sugar-cane-producing countries can turn out approximately six tons of sugar per acre as against 1.2 tons produced from beet in this country.

Last, but not least, there is the further consideration that the unfair competition of the sugar-beet factories in this country with the refineries reduces the throughput and efficiency of the latter, thereby raising to some extent the cost of sugar to the consumer. R. USHER.

4 Summerlands Avenue, W.3.

WHEAT POLICY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In view of Mr. Montague Fordham's letter, may I say that Sir William Wheat did not mention any provisions for the prevention of price "vacillations" in an upward direction? He seemed greatly concerned to avert the horrors of cheap bread, but showed no anxiety lest bread should be dear.

Court Haw, Woodmansterne, PETER IBBETSON.
Banstead, Surrey.

THE DOUGLAS SCHEME

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The "simple experimental test" as suggested by Mr. C. L. Hunt could neither prove nor disprove Major Douglas's theorem. The estimate of total incomes would need adjustment to allow for purchasing power available through sales below cost in a previous period, and purchasing power made available by such operations as, e.g., distribution by Government from loans in advance of taxation, and incomes from new enterprises unconnected with goods for sale in the given accounting period. A more fundamental objection, however, is that such a test, being static, would ignore the progressive increase in the ratio of plant, or machine costs to personal costs, over against the progressive dwindling of export markets and of fresh fields for profitable enterprise.

What Mr. Hunt should press for is a serious, instead of perfunctory, examination of the proposals in open court.

74 Wimbledon Park Road, W. L. BARDSLEY.
S.W.18.

HOW TO STOP WAR

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—There is some force in the question raised by Mr. Creech Jones why the transport workers should be singled out to bear the brunt of the suggested organising to stop war. Everyone will agree with his remarks concerning their splendid record in this direction, e.g., the Jolly George in 1920.

At the same time it would be interesting to learn from Mr.

Creech Jones whether he would have raised objections if your correspondent had suggested that all Trade Unionists should be organised for the purpose. **H. W. Durand.**

Chairman, London School of Economics
Labour Party.

THE SWEEPSTAKES BILL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Sir,—A foreigner knows little of British Parliamentary or Constitutional practice, but would be much interested to have some explanation of a comment in your issue of March 26th. You say of Sir William Davison's Sweepstakes Bill, "its introduction is, of course, no more than a gesture; the Bill will be printed and circulated, and there will be an end of it. This seems strange. If, as appears to be the case, the House of Commons approve the measure, why is there to be an "end of it"? For surely if sweepstakes ought to be legalised, they ought to be legalised without delay and not "in the course of the next decade." The matter is not unimportant. Every few months a lot of money goes over to Ireland which might well stay here, especially in these days of national economic distress. Why, then, a foreigner would like to know, is there no hope that a measure shall become law of which the Commons approve? Without being presumptuous, a foreigner would also like to know whether there is not something wrong with a Parliamentary system wherein Parliament "of course" (I quote your words) says in the same breath—"Something ought to be done about it.—Nothing is going to be done about it." Is the Mother of Parliaments senile? H. F. Rossetti.

Hillside, Harrow-on-the-Hill.

PUBLISHERS AND REVIEWERS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Sir,—As an ex-bookseller, and now a publisher, and reviewer of experience, I would like to take the liberty of answering or commenting on a few points concerning Mr. Ellis Roberts' admirable letter to Mr. Frank Swinnerton in this week's THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

(1) *Re* publishers' advertising: Publishers continue their expensive and quite unproductive advertising in order to keep their name before other authors than their own, to entice new authors; and to a certain extent even the public these days realises that certain publishers' imprints are a certain guide to the quality of the book they may want to read. An increased royalty only pleases the one person concerned, apart from the fact that many authors these days would rather have increased advertising than increased royalties.

(2) Literary cliques. A great deal is being said about this at the moment, and quite rightly. Last week's issue of *Time and Tide* rightly hits the nail on the head. There are many glaring incidents to-day in first-class journals where this occurs, and I can honestly say that THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is one of the few journals where this does not occur. Great names, too, are often employed in reviews, but are not necessarily authoritative; yet when an authority on a certain subject wishes to review a book, if his name is not sufficiently "box-office" he is summarily "turned down." Authoritative journals ought to be above this.

(3) Mr. Ellis Roberts states that he has a "masterpiece" in his office, turned down by every conceivable publisher—very likely—conversely, many a great book is constantly published with (and without exaggeration) a total sale of seventy-five copies and a two to three hundred pounds loss! Disheartening, therefore, to publish the genuine "masterpiece"—that word misused by certain publishers. B. van Thal.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton.

FATHER AND CHILDREN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Sir,—I do not know if it is of any great interest to anybody, yet, to know from whom I derive. In your issue of March 5th, Mr. Richard Sunne blames Liam O'Flaherty. Knowing Liam O'Flaherty I fear he will not be complimented. After all, he is a realist and I am, if anything, a romantic. Mr. Edward Garnett suggests "an Irish and a Russian author"—which displeases Mr. Sunne as being mere conjecture. I am sorry to drag my parentage into the limelight, but I feel, in justice to myself and Liam O'Flaherty, that I should say that Mr. Garnett—who is obviously referring to George Moore and Tchehov—has gone so close to the mark that it may be called a bull's-eye.

Seán O'Faoláin.

Miscellany

NO PLACE OR TIME

THIS curly childhood of the year,
  These days of dancing blood—
Is Spring the proper time for breath
  To be resigned for good?

When Summer's face is bright and clear,
  And all the trees are green—
Shall I believe the time has come
  To creep away unseen?

When Autumn shuffles leaves of gold,
  And deals them in one heap—
Must I agree that that's the hour
  For everlasting sleep?

And when the world is white with snow,
  With Winter in his prime—
I'll still maintain that Death's a fool,
  That knows no place or time.

W. H. Davies.

AN ETHNOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT

THE following fragment was communicated to the writer by Mr. Ithiel Samways, of Cape Parabe. It appears to be part of a descriptive account of the people of Laputa found amongst the documents inherited by his mother and formerly the property of her illustrious ancestor, Lemuel Gulliver.

. . . and side by side with this complete freedom from embarrassments and inhibitions in one department of social life, they support a system of food taboos more elaborate than that of any other people, a system so amazing that only its sacred character has hitherto protected it from the inroads of civil reform. I propose to give you first some idea of the theory with which they are in the habit of rationalising their strange practices.

Their ancient teachers, some of whose sayings have survived the corrupting effects of tradition and the eroding influences of a long succession of not infallible scribes, have equipped this people with a body of doctrine which joins so well with human nature that until very recent times it has received universal approbation. Man, they say in effect, though a spiritual being, acquired by the sin of his first ancestors a gross animal desire to eat—to defile his body by stuffing impure matter into his mouth. His emotions and passions belong to the spirit and are entitled to respect and even reverence, but his impure desire to fill his mouth, the sacred organ of speech and song, with the dead matter of plants and animals is part of his brutal nature and is certain evidence of his fall.

Eating, with this people, is a sin, a bestial practice. The brute creation eats shamelessly and at every opportunity. The angels do not eat. The saints are those who die rather than touch food. (Many men and women amongst them have suffered martyrdom by starvation for righteousness' sake). Since the common man is weak by nature and cannot be expected to attain this saintly perfection, a concession must be made to his frailty: for, says the ancient teaching, it is better that he be permitted to take food within the bonds of the commensal compact than that he commit the grievous sin of unauthorised eating to the great scandal of society and the peril of his soul. It is divine to fast, but the erring human cannot reach this ideal. He eats and the race does not die.

Some sinfully eat in secret. The many save their souls by entering into the commensal compact and eating according to rule and tradition, respecting themselves and the opinions of their neighbours, with few exceptions, for they are a highly moral people. Those who are prevented from achieving the compact suffer hunger in the midst of plenty as victims of convention, of religion, of conscience, or of social and economic pressure. Though few actually die of starvation, men and women obviously ill-nourished are a common sight. Almost as common are the overfed, for food prohibition has worked in many the usual effect of prohibitions, an inclination to excess. These are the libertines who feed regardless of law, of tradition, and even of reason. They have become a focus of strong attraction for the militant activities of the extremely thin, restless, and ardent purity-mongers who salve their own suppressed desire to eat by persecuting illicit eating in the interests of public morals.

Public morals demand that no person take food in the presence of another except his legal commensal with whom he dines and sups throughout his life. It is true that here instinctive modesty has no need to be reinforced by law; nevertheless the law has sometimes to be called in to defend the public against certain people (now agreed to be cases for the psychiatrist) whose natural instincts are so deficient or so perverted that they are capable of feeding without shame in the presence of their neighbours like the brutes that perish. Decency allows no direct reference in speech to food or, except in scientific terms, to any part of the alimentary system. Yet, in spite of polite usage, sly oblique references to the forbidden topic form the staple of numerous anecdotes told and retold in clubs and places of social intercourse, in the playhouses and in popular literature. Flippancy glancing at alimentation is tolerated everywhere, and a sentimental idealisation of the virtue of fasting is the commonest subject of popular drama where emaciated heroes and heroines come pure and unscathed out of fiery gastronomic temptations to settle in virtuous commensality. Public discussion of dietetics is sternly repressed both by social disapprobation and by the might of the law, whilst as a topic of private conversation it is only broached with confusion and hesitancy.

The consequences of this attitude to nutrition are more serious than this people suspects. A profound ignorance of the relative value of foods, the culinary art, the quantity of food necessary to maintain the body in health, and the number of times that it is advisable to eat during the twenty-four hours, informs their most advanced teachers. The production of foodstuffs is carried on in a half secret and wholly apologetic way, so that only the natural fertility of the country prevents the frequent occurrence of famines. Enterprise or experiment in anything connected with food is improper. Thus new dietetic knowledge is rare and discoveries are never communicated. Some of the most nutritious fruits and vegetables are left to decay, whilst nettles and such weeds are common provender. Cookery is very primitive, and most food is consequently so unpalatable that it cannot be a great hardship to practise the virtue they esteem so highly.

There is amongst them a vast amount of dyspepsia, gastric ulcer, appendicitis, and other diseases of the alimentary system, which they suffer in shamed silence or under the baleful ministrations of quacks. Medical science has nevertheless made some advances in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of nutrition and the digestive system, and scientists are able and willing to make contributions to the amenities of life by showing how health and happiness can be got from the rational use of food; but worthy people discourage them, saying that the sanctity of the ancient taboos and the purity of society should not be violated to permit the entry of licentiousness and sensualism.

So every commensal couple continues to confine its diet to the foods prescribed by its contract and refrains from a vulgar inquiry into what other people eat. Infidelity to one's contractual diet merits the censure of all decent-minded citizens; to dine with a stranger is disgraceful. Licentious financiers and wicked princes there have been in times past whose shamelessness was such that they openly enjoyed food and sat at banquets with many whom they had corrupted and ate and drank all manner of forbidden things. They are held up as examples of unrighteousness to the young, but tales of their excesses are only hinted at in the most guarded language lest decency be outraged.

The child, on the day that he is weaned, is made to adopt a veil that covers the mouth like a yashmak. The clothes of this people, though otherwise convenient and attractive, always include some such garment, for the mouth may not be exposed on pain of social disgrace and legal punishment. A strange ambivalence attaches to that feature. It is at once sacred and unclean. It is the temple of the spirit, the sacred organ of speech, but most liable to defilement. It is, as the Melanesians say, charged with "mana," full of the mystical power to bless or to curse. It is the focus of all the most ancient cults. Magical and religious ideas, mythology and philosophy hang thick about it.

Their philosophers have established a weighty foundation for the support of the oral cult. In recent times one alone, a nobleman, has ventured to attack it and to suggest the abolition of all its taboos. The masses, who suffer under the oppression of the unhappy system, passionately repudiate this bold philosopher, who, but for his contributions to mathematical science and the charm of his literary style, would be . . .

LOUIS HERRMAN.

SCHNABEL AND THE GRAMOPHONE

IN musical circles it is well known that for years attempts have been made vainly to persuade Artur Schnabel to record for the gramophone. As will always happen with famous pianists nowadays, many of his friends and pupils have urged that it was his duty to posterity to put on record his playing of, for example, Beethoven's sonatas; to which Mr. Schnabel has always replied: "It is for posterity to play Beethoven's sonatas not to listen to my playing of them." But now it has come about that Mr. Schnabel has agreed to make a certain number of recordings and a Beethoven Society has been formed to enable members to subscribe to these records of which the first series will be ready on June 1st.

I do not profess to know why Mr. Schnabel has made these records, but I am not surprised that he has done so, nor would I be surprised if he were to declare that he, himself, does not know why he has done so. It is just fate.

Most music-lovers will think it the most natural and right thing in the world for Mr. Schnabel to make these records and will wonder at any suggestion that its rightness should not be taken for granted. For them I will attempt to express some views which may show that the matter is not so simple as it may seem. Like many music-lovers, I possess a gramophone. It has occasionally given me and some of my friends pleasure, although it is more than a year since I last used it and I have never used it much. But then, I hear as much music as I can assimilate, and I find when I am at home and have time to spare I prefer to play myself (very badly) on the pianoforte to listening to the best of records. And I have no doubt that when I possess Mr. Schnabel's records they will remain shut in their cases while I am playing altogether inadequately the very sonatas of which I possess records played magnificently by Mr. Schnabel. Even if I should have a friend to whom I wished to give some inkling of Mr. Schnabel's quality I should hesitate to produce one of these records for fear lest its extraordinary qualities should not be adequately perceived.

For let there be no mistaking the quality of these records. I have heard some of the tests Mr. Schnabel has made and I have no hesitation in declaring that such records have never been made before. It may be that Mr. Schnabel is right when he originally said that it was for posterity to play Beethoven's sonatas for itself and not to listen to his playing of them; but, nevertheless, we may be more than doubtful whether such playing as Mr. Schnabel's will ever be heard again, because a musician and pianist of his calibre is not born every generation. I do not think that even yet musicians are fully aware of the extraordinary character of Mr. Schnabel's playing. One sometimes feels that it is simply put in the category of great playing, such as may be expected from the one or two supreme virtuosos of every age (using the word virtuoso in its highest sense) from Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, down to the present day. To consider Schnabel's playing in this light is to have no true appreciation of its nature.

Let me make this clearer by drawing attention to the fact that although Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt were all great virtuoso pianists, they must have differed enormously in the nature and power of their playing. Surely we might expect to find in their playing qualities similar to those which distinguish their compositions from one another! I, at any rate, believe so, and I for one refuse to put Mr. Schnabel in any category of great contemporary pianists, because I find his playing absolutely unique, and I consider it as little likely that the world will ever hear such pianoforte playing again as that it should ever have such a composer as Beethoven again. When Mr. Schnabel's own rather difficult and inaccessible compositions are better known musicians will be able to appreciate the fact that his pianoforte playing is no more accidental than Beethoven's was, but has its foundation, like Beethoven's, in his genius as a musician.

Now shall we hear Mr. Schnabel as he plays in a concert hall before a living audience when we put on our machine (however good it may be) one of the records which he has made? I have no hesitation in saying we shall not. But I must hasten to add that, nevertheless, even what is given in the record is something far beyond the capacity of us music-lovers to conceive. We are—let us be quite frank—none of us sufficiently gifted musically (and I am referring to persons gifted in music, whether professional or amateur, not to the ungifted) to understand fully Mr. Schnabel's playing or Beethoven's music. As I have sat listening to Mr. Schnabel playing again and again one movement, for example, of a Beethoven sonata, when recording, to get it to his own satisfaction, I have marvelled at the degree of integrity and genius to which the human spirit can attain. For Mr. Schnabel has only himself to satisfy. It is he who pushes the boundaries to his understanding of and his playing of Beethoven's music farther and farther away, for they are now so far that he alone can perceive them, and for the rest of us it is impossible to see limitations any longer. What is it that makes this intense and insatiable demand upon this great musician? It is the demon of music itself to which every true musical genius is loyal and responsive according to the degree of his genius. I venture to think that only a musician of the calibre of Mozart or Beethoven himself could understand wholly what Mr. Schnabel does and does not do, or could offer any really appropriate comment upon his rendering of their music.

But as Mr. Schnabel himself once said, the sign of a living performance of a Beethoven sonata is that when finished it is over and the performer lives to look forward to playing it again and giving it another life. But a gramophone disc is a dead object, it is a performance fixed for ever, and it may be that this dead object will become a substitute for the living sonata. Nevertheless, this is the academic tendency, and I expect, therefore, to find these Beethoven records, these dead discs, much in vogue at instructional centres and institutions where there is always the demand for a dead pattern rather than the living art. But I have some comfort for those who will buy these records, hear them with enthusiasm, speak of them with excitement, and ultimately leave them lying untouched in their cases if they have the true living instinct for music. And their comfort is that Mr. Schnabel will be giving a series (complete, I hope) of Beethoven sonata recitals at the Queen's Hall next autumn, and we, after hearing these magnificent records, will be able to go and hear the living performances. These performances will not be the same as those recorded, not because of imperfections, but because nothing that is living is static. Personally, I think it a pity that it will be soon possible for anybody to buy a record and hear Mr. Schnabel playing Beethoven, but I admit that this may be a stupid idiosyncrasy. I am glad that it is not possible for me to hear Beethoven or Mozart play, and I would have preferred that musicians in the future had no record of how Mr. Schnabel played. The Schnabels, the Beethovens and the Mozarts of the future would have understood from their music the playing of the great composers of the past; and why should the ordinary man have the illusion that he understands because he possesses a small disc labelled "Schnabel," when the truth will be that this disc may be used in the future to try to prevent some contemporary man of genius from realising his own conception of Beethoven's sonatas?

W. J. TURNER.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, April 1st—

"Musical Chairs," Criterion.
Orchestral Concert, Royal College of Music, 8.15.
Kolisch Quartet, St. John's Institute, Westminster, 5.30.

Sunday, April 3rd—

J. Katz on "H. G. Wells and the Happiness of Mankind," Hampstead Ethical Institute, 59, Finchley Road, 11.15.
John Murphy on "Goethe as a Man," Conway Hall, 11.
Elizabeth Schumann, with London Symphony Orchestra, Albert Hall, 3.
Haydn Concert, Conway Hall, 6.30.
Reading by Lionel Britton of "Sparetime Inn," I.L.P., 27, Barry Road, S.E. 22, 7.30.
"Pelléas et Mélisande," Arts Theatre.

Monday, April 4th—

Kolisch and International Quartets, St. John's Institute, Westminster, 5.30.
Miss Sackville-West on "New Books," B.B.C., 6.50.
"Othello," St. James.
"Old Man Murphy," Savoy.

Tuesday, April 5th—

Ideal Home Exhibition.
"The Heart Line," Lyric.

Wednesday, April 6th—

Mr. G. Lowes-Dickinson on "Goethe," B.B.C., 7.30.
Prof. H. J. Laski on "Nationalism and the Future of Civilisation," Conway Hall, 7.
Bach B Minor Mass, B.B.C. Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
"Caravan," Queen's.

Thursday, April 7th—

Sir William Beveridge on "The Family Return: A First Impression," B.B.C., 7.30.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IN *Avowals*, which is one of the most entertaining and so most aggravating of his critical books, Mr. George Moore, with the assistance of a Landorian Edmund Gosse and other interlocutors, writes much about the novel. Whenever he writes about the novel he has to scold the English novel; and I always think he does that with the air of a man who is scolding an occasion for sin, an occasion which is frequently too much for his self-control. It is not the temperate man who makes a great fuss about the facilities given for drinking; and when Mr. Moore is touchily complaining about the novels of Fielding or Thackeray, he does so in a way which makes me wonder whether he does not at times rather shamefacedly, placing his *Marius the Epicurean* ostentatiously on the table by his chair, slip out a copy of *Tom Jones* from behind the cushions. Then, of course, he must denounce the instrument of his downfall. Whether there be any English novels that are masterpieces will depend, of course, on your view of a masterpiece. Those who asseverate that there are no masterpieces in English narrative mean, as a rule, that no English novel is a perfect work of art; and a great many of these critics I am sure mean, by that, no English novel is an *objet d'art*. For which we may be properly thankful. For the lack of the *objet d'art* in English fiction—there are plenty in English poetry—is due to the English superabundance of one quality without which the choicest novels tend to become mere specimens, dried skeletons of pathetic and dreary loveliness. That quality is vitality. In the novel vitality spreads from the author to his characters in such a way that they assume control of their own destinies and lead their creator, to his delight or indignation, down very unexpected paths. Then comes the novelist's real test. If he be frightened he will refuse his creatures' tugging invitation and insist on their resuming the places originally arranged for them; if he be excited and pleased he will let the creatures break his pattern and make something more entrancingly life-like, more subtly because less obviously artistic, out of the rascals' escapades. Isn't it obvious that this is what happened to Thackeray in all his major fiction? Rawdon Crawley refuses to remain the purely stupid fellow he was first intended to be; and I warrant that old Pendennis and Stunning Warrington, and even, at moments, Laura herself, ran down paths and alleys which were not even marked in the original map of their lives' journeys. It is in fiction of this kind that the English novelists excel; and if it produces no masterpieces I can only say that it is because its greatest examples pass into a region where creative generosity overwhelms the artist and the reader so thoroughly that one is not interested in definitions. I daresay *Phèdre* is more of a masterpiece than *King Lear;* but I know *King Lear* is an indefinitely greater work—it is more inexhaustible, it conveys more of life and tragic beauty, it has a richer spiritual content and therefore is more magnificent artistically because ultimately the validity of art is a question of spiritual values.

* * *

One of the most entrancing things about English fiction is that when our novelists do attempt the more formal narrative, keep closer to the pattern, often the form and the pattern have a liveliness that the French will not allow themselves. This is partly due, I suppose, to that deplorable delight in a sense of humour which Mr. Moore gravely deprecates as an enemy to art. The critical objection to it is intelligible in those who value formality, for nothing is more destructive, often unseemlily destructive, of a grave pattern than a fit of the giggles. Where the English novelists excel is in that clouded laughter, that grave, smiling irony which admits tragedy, but keeps the tragedy on that plane where, in ordinary social life, it is perforce kept. Whether this is good or bad is another problem; but while English manners are what they are, the fiction representing them cannot become too melodramatic. I have just finished—it was an Easter Monday holiday treat—reading a little masterpiece of social tragi-comedy—Mrs. MacCarthy's *A Pier and a Band* (Secker, 3s. 6d.). This book was first published in 1918; I know a great many people who read novels, and yet none has ever told me that in *A Pier and a Band* we have a most delicately observed, exquisitely written story of modern England, in which Mrs. MacCarthy has stated with a delightful precision, an admirable justice one of our most urgent problems—the "spoiling" of the countryside, and stated it through people whose every movement and word have a sensitive, authentic reality.

* * *

The story is simple. Mr. Tippits buys Watersmouth, an estate between Glen, which is Sir John Forest's, and Luckcombe, Mr. Victor Villiers'. Mr. Tippits has made a fortune in gin, and he proposes to develop his estate and his neighbours. He wants a pier and a band. He wants hotels. He wants villas and lodging-houses and crowds of tourists. He wants, above all—though this he only just realises—to get rid of that loneliness of nature, that aweful splendour which oppresses so sorely the self-satisfaction of gentlemen who have made fortunes in gin. To-day—the book's period is the 1890's—he would have designs on the stars, which are also disconcerting to human vanity. He is honest, and he is vital. His vitality attracts Mr. Villiers' daughter, Perdita; it shocks Sir John Forest, and also Sir John's grandson, Anthony. If Sir John has his way, there will be no railway, no pier, no band, no lodging-houses, no trippers. Tippits, however, succeeds in seducing the idle, dilettante, impoverished Villiers who sells him some of his lands, and then, in spite of Sir John, the improvements are started. There is a quarrel between Sir John and Villiers, and the children are expected to share it and cease to know each other. Now if Mrs. MacCarthy had been aiming at a "masterpiece" what would she have done with this plot? Anthony, who is rather subnormal in temperament, would have been obedient to his grandfather's behests, taken up the feud with feeble ferocity, devoted himself to the estate and remained a bachelor for its sake. Perdita, lost in romantic love for an Anthony of her dreams, would have been faithful and futile; she shares the Forests' dislike for Tippits' enterprise, and she would have nursed that hatred and suppressed in herself as obscene the liking she has for the little vulgarian's vitality. So the story would, in a grave, quiet, somnolent dignity have gone on; and at the end an elderly Sir Anthony, a bleak though unembittered Miss Villiers would have met occasionally at tea-parties and lamented the present generation. That is the story's formal development. How much better is the course Perdita and Mrs. MacCarthy give to it! Perdita is admirable, wise as well as clever; she finds that the crisis makes her consider people—and circumstances have no other purpose in life. She loves Anthony, but—is he not rather too easily influenced? Can he fight for what he wants, as she could, as Tippits can? These apprehensions invade her mind very quietly, disturbing, destructive. When Sir John dies Anthony does keep true to type: he will accept his charge and Glen, though it may mean forsaking Perdita. Then, boldly accepting life rather than a too perfectly measured artifice, Mrs. MacCarthy snatches Perdita away. She goes, as companion to Princess Olga, to a little German court, and there meets Fitzgerald, who is an artist but land-loose, and knows that what makes life wonderful is not the same as what makes life secure. The end which Perdita and Mrs. MacCarthy contrive for her story is perfectly right: it has not the neatness of the ending I have indicated, but it has beauty, and space and a sense of natural fulfilment. RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

Secret Sentence. By VICKI BAUM. Bles. 7s. 6d.

Two Soldiers and a Lady. By H. S. REID. Constable. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Jubenka. By ADRIAN ALINGTON. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

Fathers of Their People. By H. W. FREEMAN. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

Rising Waters. By HERMAN DE MAN. Lane. 7s. 6d.

The Road Home. By F. MARIAN MCNEILL. Alexander Maclehose. 7s. 6d.

The Answering Glory. By R. C. HUTCHINSON. Cassell. 7s. 6d.

Most novels belong to one of two distinct types: one in which the novelist is content to deal with his characters and their drama in their normal life and environment; the other in which they are taken out of their normal life by an exceptional experience. Vicki Baum, with a reporter's instinct, decides upon the latter method; and she is disappointing because the exceptional note is not maintained. The reader is wading out into a sea which never gets any deeper. Her book opens with a political murder, and for a few pages there is the feeling that we are soon going to be in deep water and hear what the wild Dostoevskian waves are saying; but the high suggestion of mystical salvation by murder diminishes into a sort of Gaumont Graphic tour of the path of expiation. Vicki Baum is interested in Joachim Burthe and his ever-changing scene, and not in Joachim Burthe and his soul; even in the scene he is not really much more than the shadow which throws it into relief. Within these limitations she works with a very efficient camera. It catches Joachim Burthe first as a law student meditating his crime, then—surely mistaken?—missing the crime and following his flight on the road from town to town, begging here, working there, now in the fields, now in a mine, miserably hunted but successfully eluding the police. The climax arrives when, as a gardener in an asylum, he becomes friends with a lunatic whose delusion is that he too has committed a murder. This is an excellent scene: there is the stuff of a whole novel in it. But the narrative speeds away from these implications. Burthe falls into the hands of a rather dubious psycho analytical professor who lives in a forest—how dearly German novelists love their folklore and its forest wizards! Here he is healed of his hatreds, and put clearly on the path of expiation. This he finds in a mysterious and undescribed way in America, whence he returns to end his days in a Baltic fishing village under his own name and in the unselfish service of others. The writing is vivid, the manner expert and dramatic; but the sense of movement and psychological development is deceptive. Each scene really stands still and jumps rather than grows into the next, and we cannot hide from ourselves the suspicion that the important things in Burthe's spiritual development occurred in the unwritten passages between the leap of the camera beam from one episode to the next. *Secret Sentence* is nevertheless a very competent and readable piece of reporting.

Miss Reid has also chosen an exceptional situation for her characters. She is not bothered by the traditional or fashionable ways of writing the historical novel. Her time and place are twenty-four hours on a Bournemouth moor just before the Restoration, and her method is the oblique, allusive manner of Virginia Woolf with all its feminine feints and disgressions. The book, though it deals with a crisis in the lives of three or four people, is a puzzle rather than a dramatic narrative. A Cavalier traitor lies dying, a disappointed Roundhead officer is hoping to make something out of a paper taken from his dying prisoner, the Cavalier's sister arrives and will sacrifice anything for the paper: there is only one honour, the honour of the King's cause. Her fanatical loyalties stand between her and another Roundhead whom she would otherwise marry, and who will save her brother's honour without reward. In the fog of a rainy night this is the stuff of melodrama with cloak and dagger shadows, but in Miss Reid's hands it becomes something very different: a psychological puzzle in which we piece together the characters and the historical currents they personify, only by great attention. The pleasure one derives from this book springs in part from this very difficulty and also from the fact that Miss Reid's feeling for life transcends period. She brings out of the past minds as sensitive as we suppose our own to be. Her allusive method has its tedium, at times it is exasperating. But over and over again some felicity of phrase, some clear picture, some prolonged glance at the period (all the more convincing for being seen covertly, as it were, and askance) brings one back attentively to the book again. Here is Southern England seen by a Puritan officer worried by the problems of Grace and Reprobation and annoyed by the Tables of Affinity:

> Riding to meet her he was surprised by the beauty of the world. The grass (refreshed by Autumn rains and not yet withered by the frost) was so green that even he remarked on it. The rain puddles themselves were very clear and brimming; they leapt in great diamonds from beneath his horse's feet. The faces of the people in the road were comelier than usual.
>
> They were comely but not kind; even a lover could not read kindliness in them. The carter and the hedger scowled at him: the goose girl was too bashful to return his greeting; the parson anchored to a browsing cow, drifting beside her along the ditches with her rope in one hand and a small Greek book in the other, looked up from the close-printed page with an unfriendly expression. All these people might have their private reasons for ill-humour; the parson, for example, might have been dragged from his pulpit by a preaching soldier. George was not astonished at his sour looks; what did trouble him at last was that the spinning women should run inside their houses and bar the doors as soon as they had seen him.

Miss Reid is a very subtle artist and her book is great relief after the pert and snobbish historical fiction which has borrowed the tricks of *Elizabeth and Essex* and left the substance.

The choice of the exceptional circumstances is the obvious formula for the humorous writer. Mr. Alington has hit upon the fruitful idea of putting an exiled Ruritanian king and his companions incognito into a Sussex village. His treatment of the theme is, however, far from obvious. Mr. Jubenka, the king, is a slender failure, although it is hard to see what Mr. Alington could have done with him; but his companions, the little Count brought up on nineteenth-century English literature by a sententious Oxford tutor, and the General who fumed at the English climate, sat swilling down pints of beer in the village inn and terrified the yokels with his capacity and growls, are excellent figures. Between the robust English humour (which seems to have died out in favour of the purely verbal high jinks of P. G. Wodehouse) and the heavily underlined gambols of *Punch* there is a very satisfying and rarely exploited vein of which Mr. Alington is a good exponent; the quiet, the devastatingly observant, the ironic and very sly, which prefers to wait its opportunity rather than to force it.

If we have lost the feeling for the robust we have still this sly and native inertia to draw upon. Mr. Freeman, in a completely different and serious novel about life on a Suffolk farm, has sunk his roots into this soil. The Brundishes have had Pond Hall Farm for three hundred years, and however wildly the young may break loose they are inescapably part of it. They return to be, in more senses than one, Fathers of their people. There is more than inertia in the land: out of it spring a well-tilled wisdom and a studious humour. The difference between Mr. Freeman and many modern authors who write of peasant life is that he sees to it that the Brundishes sow their wild oats on "off" days. Farming rather than incest, adultery and murder is their chief business; benignant realism rather than Druidic pawkiness Mr. Freeman's. His descriptions of lambing, haymaking and ploughing are there no doubt more for their own sake than for the sake of his characters' private dramas. Mr. Freeman is, perhaps, a little arable; but with its careful, observant sympathy, its sobriety, its submission to the land, his picture is as satisfying of its kind as a Morland.

Mr. De Man, a Dutch author, has also preferred the normal to the exceptional, and his theme is similar to Mr. Freeman's, though the place is Holland and the conflict is between a farmer's dominating widow and her son. Here again rebellious human passion is ultimately subdued by the claims of the soil. Beside the haunted Celt these English and Dutch farmers are doubtless prosaic people. Thwarted passion does not canker in them, their resignation is without long-dated hatred. Mr. De Man's young farmer swallows his disappointments, becomes a power in the community and sacrifices his own land first when the dykes have to be flooded. A certain childlike aimlessness in the narrative, and the fact that the land so quickly gets the upper hand of the human conflict, tend to make the narrative wilt for lack of drama. Yet, almost mysteriously, the characters grow older, interests give place to passions, old loyalties give dignity to later foibles; so that the thick-headed farmer is not a ridiculous figure when he goes wooing in middle age, and there comes over the mother a kind of beauty in her cunning intrigue to get back to the country of her childhood. In the simple writing there flowers an unforced imaginative sympathy. There is wisdom, tenderness and truthfulness in *Rising Waters* which leave their mark upon the reader.

Miss McNeill also follows the normal circumstances of her characters. *The Road Home* reads like autobiography, is very gay and garrulous in a homely way about an Orkney childhood, and then develops one of those difficult love affairs in which an obtuse young woman and a young man who has taken "Silence and then Three Nuns" as his sufficient guide to love are surprised at each other's neglect. Of this book and *The Answering Glory*, a tale of missionary life, it may be said that the authors had good material, but that it has not been thoroughly melted down and remoulded in the imagination. *The Answering Glory* has two characters with possibilities, a fever-wracked missionary woman and a whisky-sodden trader terrified of God. But the book collapses into shapeless triviality after a few pages.

V. S. PRITCHETT.

LABOUR IN THE U.S.A.

The History of the American Working Class. By ANTONY BIMBA. Martin Lawrence. 5s.

This is a badly written book, based on secondary, and not always adequate, sources rather than on the original material. It is written from a definitely Communist angle which insists, as all such works insist, upon reducing complex events to the simple formulæ required by the categories of Communist doctrine. On occasion it avoids argument for rhetoric; on occasion, also, it becomes hysterical in tone.

Yet, with all these defects, it is a valuable book, which students of American history and civilisation will do well to read. For it will draw their attention to aspects of the American adventure which too rarely find their way into the ordinary books; and it will bring into their view an interpretation of American history too often suppressed by the classic historians. The points on which Mr. Bimba insists are almost always significant, even when, as too frequently, he over-emphasises their significance. American history is largely unintelligible without the use of the clues he affords.

For the fact is that the American adventure has now become the classic illustration of capitalist operations, just as England was the classic illustration for Marx seventy years ago. It shows with unsurpassed clarity what occurs when the search for profit dominates all other motives in the community. It makes plain how the system of production shapes to itself the whole mental and social climate that it encounters. It emphasises the certainty that the divorce of the masses from the ownership of the means of production has the inevitable result of stimulating what Mr. Bimba is entitled to call the class-war in its typical form. And had he sought to widen the illustrative material with which he deals he might, I think, have fairly concluded that the American collapse since 1929 is not unlikely to become famous in future historiography as the supreme instance of a capitalism which is becoming, through its own inherent contradictions, its own grave-digger.

If the reader of Mr. Bimba's book sets it in a sceptical perspective, it will, I think, have two effects upon him. On the one hand he will wonder at the ineptitude of American domestic statesmanship which, with so magnificent an opportunity, has yet been content to repeat on a larger scale all the tragedies of European capitalism. On the other he will be tempted to conclude that if ever the bankruptcy of *laisser-faire* as a social philosophy was demonstrated, America provides the supreme demonstration. A working class incapable of solidarity by reason of racial divisions and a pathetic confidence in its prospect of ceasing to be a working class; Trade Unions which have rarely been able either to dominate their trades, or to affect the outlook of the political parties; a governing class which dominated the legislatures, the Courts, and the educational system; natural resources so great that, until quite recently, almost any taxation produced a budgetary surplus; it almost seems as though America was made to offer proof of the virtues of capitalism in action.

Mr. Bimba shows the other side of the picture. Beginning with the seventeenth century, he shows the price that has been paid by the disinherited for the achievement of capitalism. But he does not, I think, make his point that the consciousness of the price paid has ever given to the workers the sense that their interests are incompatible with the maintenance of a system built on profit. Even to-day that is far from being the case. The Socialist movement in America remains completely ineffective; the Communist movement is hardly more important than our own. Despite the fact that the two historic parties are completely worthless to the working class, that class retains a touching confidence in them. The romantic phase of American working-class history, in a word, is far from over. Unskilled labour remains largely unorganised. The American Federation of Labour is permeated by a psychology of collaboration with the employers which makes it regard aggressive political and economic action as an indefensible error. The corruption of working-class leaders is an everyday occurrence. Protest against such horrors as the present coal-strike in Harlan County is still individual rather than general in character. Mr. Bimba admits that the American working class is backward compared to what we understand as organisation in Europe. But in the light of that admission his simple faith in the coming of an American Revolution seems to me an illusion in any terms of a time we can foresee. No doubt he is right in his insistence that a proletarian revolution will come in America. No doubt, also, he is right in urging that American capitalism has passed into that imperialist phase of which the outcome is bound, in the end, to be collapse. But I think he widely underestimates the length of the road the American workers must travel before they learn the clear lesson of their experience in the post-war years. There are only thirteen per cent. of the workers organised; there is no serious workers' political party in America. Those are the two basic facts which constitute the strength of American capitalism. They represent no advance upon the position of seventy years ago.

HAROLD J. LASKI.

CHILDREN WE TEACH

The Year Book of Education, 1932. Editor in Chief LORD EUSTACE PERCY. Evans. 35s.

The Children We Teach. By DR. SUSAN ISAACS. University of London Press. 3s. 6d.

An Essay Towards A Philosophy of Education. By CHARLOTTE M. MASON. Dent. 7s. 6d.

Education of the Backward Child. By D. KENNEDY-FRASER. University of London Press. 6s.

Constitution Types in Delinquency. By DR. W. A. WILLEMSE. Kegan Paul. 15s.

It is amusing to reflect that, despite the continuous heckling to which our so-called educational system is subjected, hardly anyone bothers to question the major assumptions upon which it is based. The enlightened parents of the day demur at sending their children away from home, exclaim over instances of "inhumanity," and deride the alleged production of "types"; but they seldom get any farther. Their criticism almost invariably assumes the existence of a coherent national policy, administered by a federation of enlightened and benevolent authorities. In point of fact, there is no policy, and the members of the supposed federation, in so far as they heed each other's existence at all, are occupied in playing pull-devil-pull-baker and endeavouring to frustrate each other's schemes. The only point upon which they approach unanimity has been in their determination to evade the provisions of the Burnham Scale. The elementary schools, being state-administered, are at the mercy of any whim, whether born at headquarters or in the brain of a village school inspector. Secondary education is more coherent (see the quotation printed below), since it has definite requirements to meet in the shape of examinations; but, examiners often being self-willed persons with beliefs irrelevant to their job, its coherence is hardly to be envied. Preparatory schools have their curriculum forced upon them by public schools, until they club together and protest; public schools fight the universities, and so on, up and down and all around the "system."

Anyone who regards this as more than pardonable exaggeration had better read the *Year Book* for 1932 issued under the direction of Lord Eustace Percy. The editor's foreword is an extremely candid statement of the general situation. "England," he says, "is obviously engaged at the present time in an effort, more deliberate than is usual with British policies, to effect what may be called an integration of her whole educational system." The pages which follow, and a cursory inspection of the mass of statistics and information so lucidly presented, will convince even the most optimistic that there is a good deal to be integrated. Lord Eustacy Percy writes with such temperance, and is so clear-sighted, that I am tempted to quote him again and again, but I must content myself with the following:

> The English secondary school is a somewhat rigid organism. It has the conservatism of all small self-governing bodies, for self-government is of the essence of its tradition, handed down even to purely municipal schools. It has developed a considerable variety of curriculum during the last thirty years, but it still tends to a certain uniformity of type and aim. It is too dependent on university standards to enjoy any great freedom of evolution. It is in a stage of transition. The old predominance of a single intellectual standard of classical education in all schools has been succeeded by a diversity of standards existing side by side in every school, but these alternative standards have hardly been clearly envisaged or defined.

The facts could not possibly be put better: and no one knowing the genius of the English schoolmaster need fear that a policy of integration can ever be too successful.

The Year Book contains information of every possible kind about schools in this country, in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, together with a great deal of information about conditions in America and on the Continent. The individual contributions, while they have plenty of variety, have been well edited and chosen. Especially interesting are the chapters on education in Sweden, by Mr. P. B. Coles, in Germany, by Dr. Gertrud Bäumer, and on technical education in Russia, by Principal B. Mouat-Jones; and it is pleasant to read, in the section on education in Palestine, Mr. Humphrey E. Bowman's account of a system for which he is so largely responsible.

Dr. Susan Isaacs' book is a model of common sense. She begins with an axiom, simple, obvious, and frequently forgotten.

> The children themselves are the living aim and end of our teaching. It is their thought, their knowledge, their character and development, which make the purpose of our existence as schools and teachers.

It would be pleasant if those words could be stuck up on a poster, in large letters, in the schoolrooms of that too numerous type of teacher who regards all children as a kind of fodder for teaching. "Going through the mill" has been for too long a synonym for education in this country; and it is to such inspired teachers as Dr. Isaacs that we look for a change. This little book should be in the hands of every teacher and every would-be teacher. It can do nothing but good.

Miss Mason's more ambitious book is less impressive. Of her sincerity and thoroughness there can be no boubt: but, reading the two books side by side, one responds to Dr. Isaacs' practical wisdom far oftener than to Miss Mason's sometimes unfortunately worded idealism. "There must be subjection, but it must be proud, worn as a distinction, an order of merit." It is a pity Miss Mason offers so many opportunities to the irreverent; but, once provoked, we may wonder if the results attained by certain P.N.E.U. schools of which we have knowledge were due to the fact that the pupils were all too busy being proud of their subjection to attend to the ordinary subjects in the curriculum.

Mr. David Kennedy-Fraser's book is sound and sensible. There is nothing high-falutin' about it, and he does not remind us that he is a trained psychologist. He insists upon the high suggestibility of backward children, and the need to segregate them in special classes: and proceeds to give any number of practical examples and hints for dealing with them.

Dr. Willemse's elaborate and scholarly treatise may well prove formidable to the general reader, if only for the arthritic terminology in which most of it is expressed. While we should all no doubt be gratified to hear of the Schizothyme-Schizoid-Schizophrene Group that "It is to the great merit of Kretschmer that he has both statistically and temperamentally-characterologically indicated the relations between the leptosomic, athletic and dysplastic constitution and the Schizo-personality," our pleasure may be hindered by some degree of uncertainty as to what is it all about. However, we can always pass on to the Elongated Eunuchoids, where Dr. Willemse will help us by an occasional explanation: "Acromicria, i.e., 'an elective hypoplasia of the limbs, e.g., hands and feet.'"

If this book is intended only for the specialist in psychology, it is a pity to issue it to the general public. If it is intended for the general public, there can be no defence for the jargon in which it is written. Plenty of able scientists and psychologists have shown us that it is possible to express even entirely new knowledge in terms reasonably intelligible to the average man. It is true that anyone who remembers his Greek will always be able to make out what Dr. Willemse is talking about; but some of us do not remember our Greek and some of us have none to remember.

L. A. G. STRONG.

CURIOSITY

Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy. By GRILLOT DE GIVRY. Translated by J. COURTENAY LOCKE. Harrap. 42s.

Fashions in literature may at first sight seem as unaccountable as fashions in dress, but the causes probably lie much deeper, and even the most superficial observer will be able to trace some connection between the marked revival of interest in witchcraft in the last decade and the chaos and lack of unity in philosophic and religious thought which have prevailed since the war. Scepticism and superstition are not, perhaps, such distant relations as the sceptic would like to believe, and even an age which claims to deify reason did not appear always to indulge in very rational pursuits under the guidance of its god. It is on some such lines as these that an explanation must be sought of the vast number of books dealing with occultism which have been published during the past few years, books which include not only such erudite outpourings on witchcraft as those by Mr. Montague Summers, but many reprints of earlier works on the subject, such as the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Remy's *Demonolatry*, and Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft.* These books have opened up new sources of knowledge for the expert and of excitement for the dilettante, but hitherto there has been no attempt to deal systematically with the pictorial records of the subject: M. de Givry has stepped into the breach with a volume containing over 350 reproductions from illustrated works on sorcery and its allied subjects, the dates of which range from the Middle Ages to the eve of the nineteenth century.

It is, indeed, in its illustrations that the chief value of this book lies, as the text, where it deserts its function of describing the pictures, is often open to criticism. But the reproductions, whether of cathedral sculptures, of engravings by Breughel and Dürer, of pictures by Goya and Teniers, or from rare and inaccessible incunabula, are of extraordinary interest. The existence of the book would be justified by the ten coloured plates alone, the most splendid of which are perhaps those of the Hermetic Androgyne, from a seventeenth-century German manuscript, the title-page of the Cabbalistic manuscript, *La Très Sainte Trinosophie*, and some beautiful reproductions of early tarots. The coloured plates are reinforced by the numerous illustrations in the text, many of which are attractive in themselves; each is carefully examined by the author and its significance explained. Those who wish an easy and pleasant approach to the essentially difficult and unpleasant subject of witchcraft will find it here.

M. de Givry, however, is less happy when he deserts description for dogma and declares, for instance, that "if the Satanic concept is tampered with, the whole edifice laboriously erected by the Fathers of the Church crumbles to the ground." He is somewhat more sound on the question of devil-worship and the origin

"BP"
PLUS

Plus what?

Plus a little
something
some others
haven't got

of the Sabbath, although he ignores the theory, which is at least tenable, of their pre-Christian origin:

> It is perfectly logical that certain men, having seen that God possessed His rich and honoured Church on earth, His priests, His liturgy, His ceremonies, His Mass, and His books, should have asked themselves why Satan, the Spirit of Evil whose terrifying effigy they were sometimes shown, should not have his Church also, his priests, his ceremonies, and his mass. . . . Cathedrals cannot make a display of the Devil through ten centuries to thirty generations of human beings with impunity; the result of the procedure will be a crop of folk curious to see him in reality, of flatterers anxious to pay him court, and of rebels eager to give themselves up to him, body and soul.

A more serious criticism of M. de Givry than carping at his unsubstantiated theories is that he is not at pains to make his own attitude clear; as with other writers on witchcraft, it is often hard to tell whether he is writing with his tongue in his cheek or not, and the unwary may be misled into thinking he is more serious than is really the case. He speaks with perfect gravity of witches travelling immense distances on brooms and turning into animals, and of the possibility of repeating the experiments of Benvenuto Cellini's Sicilian priest, but he tells with a slightly too emphatic innocence of devil-built bridges and writes almost with a grin of the necromantic "direct writing" of Julius Cæsar and Héloïse. One of the less satisfactory chapters is that dealing with demoniacal possession, and one might have expected some reference to the recent authoritative book by Dr. Oesterreich; much, however, may be forgiven when a few pages on there comes the recipe for making the "Hand of Glory," to counteract which it is necessary "to rub the threshold with an unguent composed of the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen, and the blood of a screech-owl; this substance must be compounded during the dog-days."

The second part of the book is concerned with magicians as distinct from sorcerers. The author has much that is both amusing and instructive to say about astrology, metoposcopy, cheiromancy, cartomancy, divination, clairvoyance and talismans, and the illustrations are as entertaining as ever. One of the most interesting authorities quoted is the well-known Oxford doctor, Robert Fludd, who is almost worth a volume to himself; one of his achievements was to produce a picture of the mystery of creation perfectly in agreement with Biblical notions and the cosmography of the Greeks.

The third and concluding section deals with alchemy and the alchemists and their patient and century-long search for the Philosopher's Stone, which has been superseded—or is it merely continued under another name?—by more modern researches. The chemists of to-day do not produce such enthralling symbolic pictures as did the alchemists, and much time can be spent with M. de Givry's aid in puzzling out the symbolism. The author has succeeded both in whetting the appetite and in satisfying it, but it is to be hoped that now he has unburdened himself of his opinions he will one day publish still more pictures with a text confined to exposition. The present volume contains an adequate index but no bibliography.

THE OLD DOMINION

Canada. By ALEXANDER BRADY. Benn. 18s.

Quebec is something of a King Charles' Head to writers on Canada. Its contributions to the sum of Canada's activities are at variance with those made outside its borders. Quebec therefore suggests topics to a writer on Imperial affairs so alien to those with which he wishes to deal that he finds himself defeated. The author of this urbane survey does not mistake federalism for nationalism. He points out that from the time of the Act of Federation, achieved under the very shadow of the American War, an aspiration that Canada should speak as with one voice has found constant expression and no more. Except for Quebec Canada is a land of change, and its geographical and other diversities render it singularly open to hybrid influences. Parliamentary and legal systems in the Dominion have succeeded in keeping their British shape, but in many other ways the United States is too close and potent a neighbour for its penetrations to be resisted. Canada's press, education, Thanksgiving and Mothers' Days, its sport and its Main Streets all plainly reveal their origins, as also do movements in which "business magnates adopt the typically North American method of creating sentiment by demonstrative conviviality." On the other hand, America is taking too many of Canada's university graduates, especially doctors, and is establishing too many of its factories in the Dominion. The figures of outside investments also are interesting. In 1930 the amount from America had risen to 59 per cent. A Labour movement has but few chances of development in a land of employers with neither peasants nor a stationary employed class, but it is completely nonplussed by trade unions in Quebec which are inimical to inter-dominion, let alone international, affiliation. Mr. Brady is Associate Professor of Political Science at Toronto University, and his book is interesting and very informative. Political institutions and life in its commercial and social aspects are reviewed in turn with an impartiality which excludes grandiose writing and is the outcome of painstaking inquiry and sober judgment. An interpretation of a pioneer country in being would be a failure if it did not give a vivid impression of Canada in transition and continually faced with crucial problems. The fact must not be forgotten that although Canada occupies one sixteenth of the world's area and its resources are probably more than one sixteenth, its population is still only 9,600,000. Canada, however, has not yet made up its mind how many or what kind of immigrants it wants. Some political questions are purposely left in suspense, such as the delicate point as to how far Canada will pursue its own foreign policy. Since the publication of this book the settlement of another important controversy is announced by the decision to begin negotiations with the United States regarding the deepening of St. Lawrence waterway. Undoubtedly the most original feature in Canada's economic life is the collective wheat-pool, a marketing device created by the farmers, which by 1929 had largely done away with capitalistic middlemen. It was then "the world's largest producers' co-operative enterprise, embracing 140,000 primary producers who raised on average about one fifth of the wheat that entered international trade." But the pool wilted before the desperate situation of surplus crops which arose in 1929, with a subsequent shrinkage of prices in a period which ushered in the present world depression. Its future is uncertain. If it fails the failure will be due, according to Professor Brady, to internal disloyalty rather than to anything being wrong with the system. In books of this kind chapters

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on "cultural life" are always a difficulty. Here the best is done with material for which the author finds it necessary to offer excuses, but he does not explain why no notice is taken of the theatre, and his allusion to Miss Mazo de la Roche will not be thought adequate by the many admirers of her brilliant *Whiteoaks* series.

CÆSAR

Julius Cæsar. By JOHN BUCHAN. Peter Davies. 5s.

It is impossible to speak of any work of Colonel Buchan's without respect. We owe too much to him, in many different ways, not to welcome with gratitude any new gift he may offer us. But after reading this latest book with care, we find it difficult to detect Colonel Buchan's purpose. It is not a life of Cæsar: and he himself plainly indicated that he has no wish to compete with the scores of previous biographers, or with Warde Fowler in particular. Nor is it exactly a character-sketch or a "psychological analysis": whenever Colonel Buchan finds himself approaching psychology he shies at it and reverts to the biography which he does not really desire to write.

Again, it is hard to decide for what class of readers the book is intended. If for the scholar, there is nothing in it which the scholar does not already know, and the scholar will have made up his mind about Cæsar without the help of this book. If for the ordinary reader, it assumes a knowledge which the ordinary reader cannot be expected to possess, and is full of allusions which he will not understand.

We imagine that the explanation is something of the following kind. Fascinated, as every student must be, by the career and personality of one of the very greatest of men, and dissatisfied equally with the undiscriminating eulogies of J. A. Froude and Mommsen, and with the detractions of Cæsar's enemies, Colonel Buchan has used his pen to clarify his own thoughts. The result is an interesting study, throwing as much light on the author as on his hero; for when we read what he thinks of Cæsar's conduct on certain occasions we learn what to think of the thinker. Certain it is that on the whole we think well of him.

Of Cæsar, what Acton said of Napoleon may be said without the change of a letter. "Take both the good and the bad: it is difficult to exaggerate either. Admire without defending, and censure without disparaging." His crimes were prodigious: the punishment of the Veneti, the treachery by which he overcame the Usipetes and Teneteri, the vengeance on Vercingetorix—it is possible, with Arnold and others, to dwell on these till Cæsar appears as a moral monster. On the other hand, one may read his letter to Cicero—"Nor does it move me that those who have been set free by me should bear arms against me; for there is nothing I more desire than that I should be like myself and they like themselves"—and cry, in Macaulay's words: "Noble fellow." Colonel Buchan tries to steer an even course between panegyric and censure, and probably comes as near to the truth as is humanly possible. He knows that all great men of action have been at times unscrupulous and have often felt themselves obliged, for reasons never completely obscure, to employ unscrupulous agents.

As to Cæsar's intellectual, political and military rank, there can, of course, be no dispute, any more than as to the commanding place he holds in history. In Shakespeare's words, he is "mighty yet": his spirit survived even the hideous confusion into which his murder plunged the world. Napoleon himself can hardly compare with him; Napoleon left behind him a "legend," Cæsar a principle which vitalised the whole West for at least a thousand years.

On certain details one may disagree with Colonel Buchan. It is a poor compliment to Cæsar to belittle his enemies. It may well be, for example, that Pompey did not seize power simply because his conscience would not allow him to do so. A man with a conscience was at a disadvantage when opposed to a man who had subdued it as thoroughly as he had subdued the Gauls. And, for his generalship, we can hardly appeal against the opinion of Napier: "Tell Dr. Arnold to beware of falling into the error of Pompey being a bad General: he was a very great one; perhaps in a purely military sense greater than Cæsar himself." We must not blame him for Pharsalia. Pharsalia was fought not by him but by a committee; and a committee loses every battle it fights.

E. E. KELLETT.

THE WHOLE AND THE PARTS

Mourning Becomes Electra. By EUGENE O'NEILL. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Sartoris. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

The Cabin in the Cotton. By H. H. KROLL. Constable. 7s. 6d.

Captain Archer's Daughter. By MARGARET DELAND. Cape. 7s. 6d.

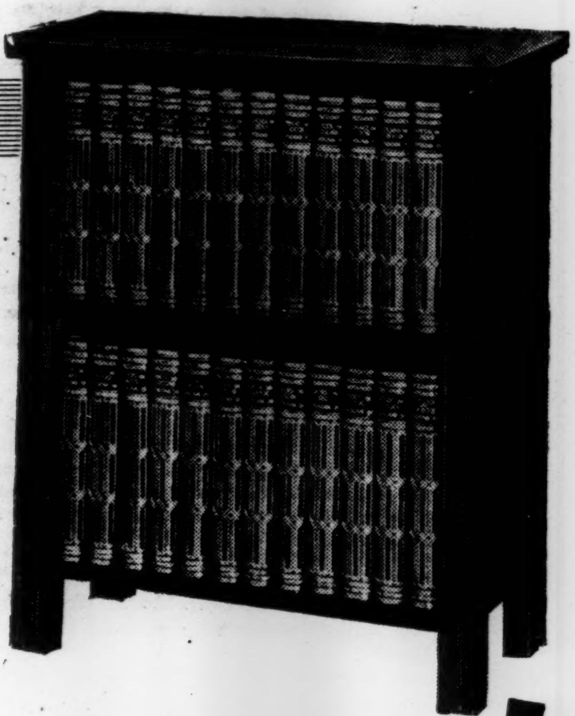
English publishers have this year given us two American books, one of which is supremely good, but the other waveringly great. To deserve the epithet great a work of art must both follow and defy the axioms of Euclid. Its whole must be greater than any of its parts, but that whole must also be greater than the sum of all its parts. Its effect must be greater than any of its effects, it must leave us knowing more than we have anywhere been told. To all its visible bodily parts must be added the invisible, immeasurable soul. By this test even so widely conceived, so steadily held, so honest, serious and conscientious a treatment of a great theme as Mr. O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* can only be called extremely, almost supremely, good, not great. He appears to show us all that there is to be known about the characters in the plays, *The Homecoming*, *The Hunted* and *The Haunted*, which are the parts of his trilogy, but in remembering the whole we realise that we have missed what matters most—the sense of the mystery, the wonder, and the beauty of life, that which we feel but can never understand. Mr. O'Neill has always been too apt deliberately to make his characters, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, into something vaguely symbolic, instead of creating them so imaginatively that they become for us symbols, as do Hamlet, Quixote, Falstaff, Helen. He has always tried to explain too much and so has told us too little. Now, with the aid of Dr. Freud, than whom there is no more disastrous artistic assistant, he is in danger of fitting one psycho-analytical explanation into another with the inhuman ingenuity of a jig-saw puzzle. But we may well be thankful that he has learned in *Strange Interlude* that the mental processes of his characters are far less convincing and far more boring when they are explained to us in soliloquies than when they are expressed or implicit in the words and actions of the play. *Mourning Becomes Electra* is the great story of the *Oresteia* in modern dress. General Mannon, the Agamemnon of the piece, returns from the Civil War to his home in a New England village, whose bleak Puritanism has supplied a nourishing soil for the bitter repressions of his daughter Lavinia and the illicit love of his wife Christine. Mr. O'Neill develops his story with his usual admirable mixture of justice and mercy; we both understand and pity his characters. Perhaps in that phrase, "his characters," lies the severest criticism of Mr. O'Neill's art; they remain *his* characters, types which he wishes us to understand, not beings whom he has created, who then live with a life of their own.

Mr. Faulkner's characters are so alive that they leave us, on first reading, almost dizzy, while, like his hero Bayard, his "young voice goes on and on, recounting violence and speed and death." But in the end we have that strange quickening of our sympathies towards all life, toward men and animals, natural beauty and the great mysteries of love, birth and death that is the gift of great poetry. As in the novels of Dostoevsky, to whose work Mr. Faulkner's is most akin, the accidents, indignities and heroisms of his characters become more than themselves, become symbols of "the blind tragedy of human events," the garments and the adventures of the soul. We know of no one now writing fiction in English who shows the potential power of Mr. Faulkner; his style reminds one of his description of an unbroken stallion.

> The stallion stood against the yawning cavern of the livery stable door like a motionless bronze flame, and along its burnished coat ran at intervals little tremors of paler flame, little tongues of nervousness and pride. But its eye was quiet and arrogant.

If some greater faith than he has yet found can master him, there is no telling to what far country Mr. Faulkner may not take us safely, as well as to that nearer country to which he often journeys, the country called hell. And even there, even now, he can give us wonder and beauty.

In *Sartoris* we see in flashes; and in the wild acts, thoughts and memories of the family, its friends and retainers during less than two years we are given a picture of the South, of four generations and two wars, tossed at us apparently haphazard, yet more



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complete, because more stimulating to our imaginations, than many volumes of detailed family chronicles. We move "among ancient phantoms of the soul's and body's fortitudes, in those regions of glamorous and useless striving where such ghosts abide." The men of the Sartoris family are born out of their time, they belong to the days when in playing with death and in the love of a comrade-in-arms consisted all the real life of men. They are

> pawns shaped too late and to an old dead pattern, and of which the Player Himself is a little wearied. For there is death in the sound of it, and a glamorous fatality, like silver pennons downrushing at sunset, or a dying fall of horns along the road to Roncevaux.

What this way of life means to the women Mr. Faulkner well knows, and he has given us two unforgettable pictures of the calm courage of Bayard's wife, and the angry courage of his great aunt,

> that indomitable spirit that, born with a woman's body into a heritage of rash and heedless men and seemingly for the sole purpose of cherishing those men to their early and violent ends. . . . How much finer that gallantry which never lowered blade to foes no sword could find ; that uncomplaining steadfastness of those unsung (ay, unwept too) women than the fustian and useless glamour of the men that obscured it.

Mr Faulkner's style can be described in his own epithets ; it can be as "brutal as sabre blows," it can be "richly desolate" or filled with "grave obscurity like a still pool of evening water." His humour can be as startling as the geranium which he calls a "merry wound," or rich with sympathy and observation, as when he says of the old darkey coachman that he was so proud that he "contrived to strut sitting down."

The great value of placing old stories in a modern setting is that we then see them with a fresh eye. In its narrow New England scene the great story of Agamemnon's family becomes all the more clearly the type of that whole Pagan philosophy of justice and revenge which must lead on to its inevitable tragedies if not conquered by that later philosophy which commands understanding and not judgment, forgiveness and not punishment. In the modern life of the South we can realise more clearly the pain and wastefulness of the life lived for love of danger. It is one great merit of books about America that English readers can see in unfamiliar surroundings the truths that are hidden from our eyes at home by a weary clutter of too familiar details. In the strange setting of *The Cabin in the Cotton*, among negroes, poor whites and poverty in a different dress and using a different idiom, we can suddenly see again what wage slavery is and how little better off materially are its victims than were those of chattel slavery. In a different air how grievous seem greed and inequality and the grinding of the faces of the poor. We may thank the publishers for giving us this glimpse of our own faults in another land. *The Cabin in the Cotton* is a sincere and convincing picture of life on a cotton plantation near the Mississippi. It is obviously written from first-hand knowledge and displays courage in risking and finally gaining the reader's sympathy by giving us so honest a picture of a weak young man, driven by ambition, torn by sympathy and disgust for his own people, as its hero.

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To read Mrs. Deland's leisurely, charmingly written, sincere, old-fashioned novel, *Captain Archer's Daughter*, after *Sartoris* is like drinking new milk, rich with cream, after heady "moonshine" whisky, and is as refreshing to those who are not too jaded to be restored by milk.

BUTTERSCOTCH

A Scotsman's Heritage. Alexander Maclehose. 7s. 6d.

Memories of the Months. Second Series. By SIR HERBERT MAXWELL. Alexander Maclehose. 6s.

A Scotsman's Heritage is a symposium by various writers. English, Irish, Welsh, are all, in comparison with the Scot, immune from the perverted patriotism of back-slapping. Ever since Queen Victoria and the Balmoral age there has been a steady spate of books of this nature that shows no sign of slowing down or giving place to anything more original.

To the Duke of Atholl has been delegated the task of writing up the Scotsman's "Courage and Loyalty" ; with such a heading the Duke was crippled from the start, he pads out with quotations of verse and with the battle honours list of the Scottish Regiments. The "Art" of Sir D. Y. Cameron is the best part of the book. The author has compiled an unassuming directory of the Scottish painters, giving each his praise just where it is due, and closes with a frank admittance that Scotland, perhaps through lack of encouragement from Church and State, has produced no painter of mighty vision. Major Elliot contributes "Politics." His essay is also a relief from most of the work in the book. He is of the defeatist school of Scotsmen, and instead of bathetic praise indulges chiefly in disclaimers. He is right, however, when he points out that Scotland has no political history, that before the Union the government was in the hands of the Kirk ; and he has other things to say that are worth the repeating.

Professor Graham Kerr provides a chapter on Education that might have been written for an elementary school. The Fisher Act, provocative of practically all contemporary educational discussion in Scotland, is not so much as mentioned. Lord Macmillan is disappointing on "Scots Law." Like the majority of the authors, he does not quite seem to know what is expected of him. Appropriately, the chapter on the Church, by Charles L. Warr, is the longest in the book. His summing-up of the Kirk is arbitrary, includes a very bitter dig at the Irish Roman Catholics, and ends on the following note :

> . . . but whatever the future may hold, it is difficult to conceive that the Scottish people will part with that heritage of political and religious liberty to which they owe so much, and which was won for them at so great a price.

The chapter on literature by George Gordon is in the Scotch tradition. "The literature of Scotland has throughout a patriotic cast," he writes, and seems to presume that the verbosity of petty patriotism is literature. Mr. Gordon knows better : for whom does he write down ?

Sir Herbert Maxwell belongs to another age. When *Memories of the Months* first came out, that age was there to receive it, but the war has come and the post-war boom and the post-war crash, and nothing has aged more than the products of the last days of Victoria. Yet Sir Herbert has still a crispness and certainty to recommend him, and a quantity of observations which, although no longer new, make good reading.

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The heroines of Miss Kaye-Smith's story are Selina and Moira, children of seven and five years old, whose lives are passed between their father's house in Hastings and a farm in the country where they spend each summer. The book is an account of their games and other occupations, their overwhelming and transitory pleasures and sorrows. It is not a book for children; it is for grown-up people, or, better still, for girls in their teens who are devoted to children; and these must make quite a large public. If any of them has the book recommended to her as charming, she must believe it, not conclude that the children in it are sentimentalised; for they are not, by any means, but neither are they aggressively shown up, as children in books of this kind sometimes are, nor treated in a solemn, heavy-handed way, as subjects for psychological demonstration. It is a very delicate matter to write about children without sentimentality or brutality, or annoying silliness, and Miss Kaye-Smith deserves gratitude for what she has avoided, as well as for what she has done.

Her children are natural children; it is not simply that there is no false touch in her account of their actions and thoughts, but they have a more positive authenticity; they strike one with the same delighted conviction that discerning and faithful reminiscence brings. The talk of the children, and their nurse, and the farm-people, has the tang of fact, and their whole social background, though it is only slightly indicated, one feels to be just right; and, which is more important, the easily diverted interests and emotions of the little girls, and their curious, reasonable ways of grappling in their minds with a strange world, are true and recognisable. For though they are distinct people, of individual character and temperament (Selina imaginative and suffering from great sensibility, and Moira bolder, more rebellious and a realist), they have first of all the common qualities of childhood. Children will not recognise them, because children do not notice, or take no interest in, the workings of their own minds, and they see the material differences between other children's games and experiences, not the likeness (and Selina and Moira had exceedingly peculiar games); but many grown-up people will recognise them, and be pleased and charmed and amused.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Company of Scotland. By GEORGE P. INSH. Scribners. 12s. 6d.

The Company of Scotland provides a remarkable story, with all the high romance and misfortune common to Scottish history. A group of gentlemen and merchants sitting together in Edinburgh founded it, fired by thought of Africa and the Indies whither their ships would sail to return laden with gold and "oliphant's teeth." The ships sailed; one by one, almost all came to disaster from pirates and Spaniards, fire and water, and the unlicensed rivalry of the East India Company. The ships' crews fought battles in America, were taken prisoners to Spain, and some remained in Darien amongst the friendly Indians. At home Scotland became fired with anger at these successive failures and the enmity of King William. Then came the curious aftermath, when the secretary of the Company himself became pirate, and under pretence of holding a dinner party led a group of friends to Leith where they boarded the English ship, *Worcester*, and detained her, in revenge, holding a crazy trial and hanging her captain below the tide mark at Leith. Mr. Insh's book reads like a novel, but his handling is too capable for its historical accuracy and completeness to suffer for that.

Hunting Insects in the South Seas. By EVELYN CHEESMAN. Allan. 10s. 6d.

In her present book Miss Cheesman writes of her experiences in the New Hebrides, whither she went in 1929–1930 on an expedition of her own, and of earlier experiences in other groups. Perhaps the most interesting notes are those which deal with the Potter Wasps; with friendly butterflies like the Monarch and the Royal, which spend a lot of time in the house and seem to have little fear of man; and those curious insects, the Praying Mantis, and the Stick Insects and the Stephanid Wasps. There are also many interesting notes on the protective shapes and colouring, or the fearsome aspects of quite harmless creatures which apparently dismay their potential enemies. It is an instinctive world that Miss Cheesman surveys, but again and again we find an insect profiting by experience or exhibiting purposive action—as when a Potter Wasp was seen to hold its lump of clay under a dripping tap to moisten it. The book, which is well illustrated, will please both the naturalist and the general reader.

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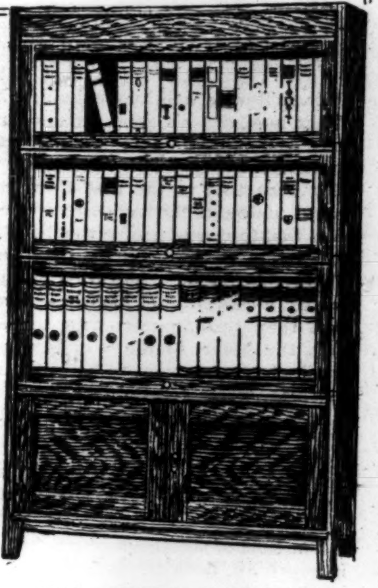

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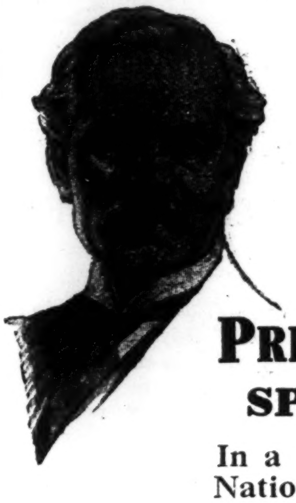

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Mr. Penty's new book gives an impression of breathlessness. Indeed, the author is in such a hurry that he cannot spare time to put in his stops, even his full stops, or to correct his grammar. But this is easily forgiven, because Mr. Penty is bubbling over with what he wants to say. His thesis is that the world is suffering from real over-production, due to machinery, and that capitalists and Socialists alike are on the wrong tack because they accept the machine-basis of modern civilisation. Mr. Penty wants us to discard most of our machines, and to revert to handicraft as a means of meeting our needs. He wants, almost if not quite, to abolish international trade, and to make even Great Britain nearly self-sufficient. He is, consequently, a strong protectionist, delighted at the breakdown of the gold standard and the rise of tariffs throughout the world. Not that mere tariffs go nearly far enough for him; for he wants to destroy the machine-industries which most modern tariffs are designed to protect. These theses will all be familiar to readers of Mr. Penty's earlier books. In his new one they are stated with an additional excitement, because he sees around him the collapse of the modernism which he dislikes.

Ruffians' Hall. By PHILIP LINDSAY. Harmsworth. 8s. 6d.

Taking his title from Nashe's phrase "will needs carouse, conspire and quarrel, that they may make Ruffians' Hall of Hell," and interpreting "ruffianism" as swaggering arrogance, Mr. Lindsay gives us swift impressions of seven men :—Morgan, the buccaneer; Hildebrand; Columbus; The Prince Regent; Bligh of the Bounty; Edward Kelly; the alchemist; and Walker of Nicaragua. Sometimes, as in the "Morgan" and "Hildebrand," he makes his men speak for themselves as on the eve of death they review their stormy pasts; or he tells the story as a novelist might tell it revealing his characters' thoughts. The style is exclamatory, and the judgment does not err on the side of charity, but there is a picaresque quality in the stories that gives them an unusual and not unpleasant savour. The book is illustrated with reproductions of old portrait prints.

Why Birds Sing. JACQUES DELAMAIN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

The tradition of bird literature is a high one, not shared by that of the mammals. Hudson and Selous are names that bring only to one the idea of birds, flying or passive, singing or hunting. Bird writers, as is pointed out in the preface of *Why Birds Sing*, belong to the Saxon rather than the Latin races, to the Protestant religion rather than to the Catholic. M. Delamain has written a book in the true tradition, while never ceasing to be a French writer. During the war he would lead advances from the lines, head bare, glasses over his shoulder, not in search of the enemy but of the birds migrating to the unwelcoming battlefields. His life has been spent by stream and in copse, along the meadows and the hills of France, watching the birds of his country busy at life: without desire to kill. *Why Birds Sing* is a worthy fruit for a lifetime of effort; it tells of the birds as we see them, or as we can see them if we take the very worth-while trouble. Although the translation is murderous, one is certain that M. Delamain's book is a great book.

Of Books and Shaving Soaps

"A BOOK'S a book although there's nothing in't." True! and no doubt the poet would have agreed that a shaving soap's a shaving soap although it makes a wash-tub lather.

YET, there are many good books and several good shaving soaps—to suit all preferences. Everyone has his own predilections and what one man thinks good, another may scorn. It may be, too, that many a man who is now satisfied that he has found his ideal in books and shaving soaps is unwittingly missing the best.

ON the subject of good books we do not presume to speak; but we know something about shaving soaps. We suggest that even if you are satisfied with your present shaving medium you might find the new Parke-Davis Shaving Cream even better. It's worth trying at least. Chemists sell it at 1s. 6d. per tube; or, if you'd like a specimen tube with further particulars, we'll send one gratis if you write a postcard mentioning this paper

Parke, Davis & Co., 50 Beak Street, London, W.1

Legends and Mysteries of the Maori. By C. A. WILSON. Harrap. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Wilson is well known in New Zealand as a journalist ethnologist and it has been his good fortune to secure from a widow of a Maori chief folk tales that have never before been related to a European. Some of them deal with the ancient wanderings of the Maori, and had they been told to the first European arrivals in New Zealand they would undoubtedly have had a peculiar value, as it is, however, all tales told to-day of people who have long been in contact with Western civilisation are suspect, for they are apt to repeat as history stories of their beginnings borrowed from the hypotheses of ethnologists; indeed, a collection of Maori tales has been published so sophisticated that they contain references to biblical characters and suggestions that the Maori cradle was Mesopotamia. The stories Mr. Wilson retells, however, seem to be in the main from uncontaminated native sources. They certainly reflect the Polynesian mind. The book's appeal is rather to the general reader than to the specialist.

Honest Harry; Being the Biography of Sir Henry Firebrace, Knight (1619-1691). By CAPTAIN C. W. FIREBRACE. Murray. 15s.

The bulk of this biography is but a retelling of the story of Charles I in captivity, from the time of his surrender by the Scots to the night when the King was arrested by the army and taken from Newport to Hurst Castle and so to trial and death. During this period Firebrace was in almost constant attendance and was the main and often the only source by which the King kept in touch with the outside world. If the present narrative tells us little of Charles that has not been told before, it gives us a clearer view of Firebrace and of his service to the King. The earlier part of the book deals with the Firebrace family, its possible origin and its ramifications in the period preceding Henry's birth. The final chapters deal with Firebrace's service under Charles II and James II as Clerk of the Kitchens and a member of the Board of Green Cloth. There are considerable appendixes giving the famous "Firebrace Narrative" and much of the correspondence which passed between the King and those who sought to effect his escape.

About Motoring

A HUNDRED YARDS IN FIVE MINUTES

LESS farsighted than the promoters of the Monte Carlo Rally, the Royal Automobile Club carelessly handed over the chief awards in their Torquay Rally to entrants who used Daimler fluid flywheels. Aware that hundreds of entrants would reach Torquay with clean road sheets in good weather, they allowed the prizes to depend on a short series of driving tests in the town of Torquay. These tests comprised a hundred yards covered as slowly as possible on top gear; a short acceleration to the highest attainable speed; and a violent stoppage under full brake power. The destination of the open awards was solely determined by the slow running test, in which nobody had even the tiniest chance against the fluid flywheel. This was probably a grievous blunder—the only flaw in an otherwise excellent administration. For no sane person wants to creep along so slowly that motion is only to be distinguished from stoppage by an observer grovelling on his tummy beside a wheel, and watching a paintmark on the tyre as vigilantly as a Yankee gunman watches his victim's gun hand.

The action of this Daimler automatic clutch is not difficult to grasp. On any fine day in an East End slum one may see a rag and bone man extracting rubbish from fond mammas by offering their children little paper windmills, with gaudy red, blue and white sails. The child puffs at the vanes, and the windmill spins. Substitute a surge of oil for the child's breath, and a steel cup for the paper vane, and you have the basic notion of the Daimler flywheel. The oil is contained in a groove surrounding the driving half of the flywheel, and the oil surges

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under centrifugal force as the throttle is opened, the engine accelerated, and the flywheel gains in speed. The oil surge impinges on steel cups formed in the open face of a driven member, and motion is imparted to the primary shaft of the gear box. The child's windmill rotates at varying speeds according to the power of the child's lungs and the exact arc of the vane on which the breath strikes. The driven member of the flywheel is put into motion by oil surges varying in power with the degree of centrifugal force, and with the angle of incidence. No matter how brutal the driver may be in the handling of his throttle, the changes of motion must necessarily be gradual and well cushioned; for the flow of a jet of oil on a smooth metal face cannot under the circumstances be catastrophic. The famous *jet d'eau* on the pier at Geneva is so powerful that if you try to push a crowbar into it, the bar is whirled out of your hand. But that is because the water has hurtled down from the summit of a distant Alp. This jet of oil is a comparatively weak flow, generated by the mild spinning of a drum some 2ft. in diameter. Man-handle it as you will, you cannot jar your car with it. For example, if you stop half-way up Bwlch-y-groes to admire the view, and when the time comes to restart you mistakenly engage top gear and then open the throttle, the car will move away as silkily as if Campbell were demonstrating a Rolls-Royce. This is an extreme case. Cars fitted with the fluid flywheel retain the standard gear box—or, rather, the preselector gear produced by the same manufacturing interests. And you are advised to select the appropriate gear ratio in order to avoid excessive slip, and the heat which would thereby be generated. But the most ruthless driver cannot make such a car balk or stagger.

There is obviously no sense in crawling along at approximately three-quarters of a mile an hour on top gear, as the Torquay winners succeeded in doing. But this stupid stunt presents the fluid flywheel in an unfair light. Give a novice the preselector gear, and he will still occasionally jar his passengers. He will, let us imagine, change up from bottom gear to top gear at ten miles an hour, and the crew will hear a thud, whilst their persons will register some such sensation as a thump with a well-padded cushion might inflict in family horseplay. Add a fluid flywheel, and they will neither hear nor feel anything. This device provides for the apotheosis of the ham-handed fool. Drive he never so clumsily, the car will always behave like a perfect little lady. I do not know that a good driver need sigh for the flywheel. Ransacking memory to conjure up some situation in which its possession might gladden the heart of a good driver, I can recall but one. Last summer a standard car was reversing in rain and inky gloom on one of the worst hairpins of the Col de Forclaz outside Chamonix. The darkness astern concealed a precipice of unknown depth; and there was no fence. As the standard plate clutch was a little fierce, some jockeying was required to set the car into upward motion, without allowing its rear wheels to slide over the edge. With a fluid flywheel, there would have been no excursions and alarms. With the hand brake full on, the hand throttle would have been opened wide on bottom gear. Nothing would have happened for the moment, but the driver would very, very gently release the hand brake; and as its pawl slid forward on the notched quadrant, he would have felt the car slide almost imperceptibly forwards. The road surface was perilously greasy; but no wheelspin would have occurred; and inevitable slip would have been concealed in the oil-throwing mechanism, and the back wheels would have received just so much power as their grip on a greasy road permitted them to transmit. If a duffer had been poised in this particular situation, he would have terrified himself and his cargo, and there might conceivably have been some ugly accident with a standard transmission; but with a fluid flywheel dear old Aunt Emma could hardly have failed to triumph over the difficulties.

It is tolerably safe to estimate that fluid flywheels will be barred in all future rallies, as they were wisely barred at Monte Carlo. That does not alter the fact that they make driving a very simple affair for the ordinary owner. The comparatively expert driver has no burning desire for such fittings, though he may appreciate the preselector gear box. Both fittings add something to the weight and cost of a motor car, and are as yet only procurable on a few special makes of chassis. America, Italy, France, and Germany are working hard to produce similar results by other means; but it does not seem probable that they can succeed in inventing mechanism at once so cheap to manufacture, so entirely dependable in prolonged use, and so efficient in reaching the objects in view.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST.

No. 1.

A forged cheque was presented at Slocombe's Bank about 3 p.m. on Thursday. It is certain that it was presented by one of the following: Pickler, Larkins and Dubb.

The police took the following statements:

From Pickler: I admit I was in the Bank on Thursday. I remember speaking to Dubb. I did not present any cheque. I should think the guilty man is Larkins.

From Larkins: I was not in the Bank on Thursday. Dubb is innocent. Pickler has never spoken to him in his life. Of course, Dubb is badly in need of money.

From Dubb: I was in the Bank about 3 on Thursday. Pickler certainly did not speak to me. I did not present the forged cheque. I am not in any need of money.

Each of these statements contains four assertions, and in each case three assertions, and three only, are in actual fact true.

Who presented the forged cheque?

Competitors for the Quarterly Prize are requested to send their solutions in on foolscap and to write their names and addresses at the top. Pseudonyms may be used. They must not only give the answer to the problem, but must show as concisely as possible how it is arrived at.

Solutions should be addressed to *Caliban* and must reach the offices of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION not later than midday on Thursday.

LAST WEEK'S PROBLEM.

Some element of chance must clearly enter into the Colonel's dispositions, since, once he has decided on the appropriate *division* of his forces, it is a matter of indifference which fortresses he chooses to occupy.

Now he can either (1) keep his forces undivided, or can divide them in four ways:

(2) Into two parties of 3 units and 1 unit respectively.
(3) Into two parties of 2 units each.
(4) Into three parties of 2, 1 and 1 units respectively.
(5) Into four parties of 1 unit each.

Investigation will show that the *third* plan—two parties of two units each (despatched at random against any two fortresses) —will yield the highest expectation of points.

The chance that the Colonel will be outpointed will then be only 1/32, or 31 to one against. For since each hostile unit may be in any one of four fortresses, there are 64 possible distributions of the enemy forces; and Blotto will only be out-pointed in the two cases where one of his parties encounters all three enemy units.

THE PROFESSOR'S DAUGHTERS.

Three solutions fulfil the required conditions as regards the expenditure of 89s.—two on the assumption of five daughters, and one on the assumption of six daughters. *But since there could be no option as to the spending of the money*, the required answer can only be *six*.

Correct solutions from:

H. N. Briggs, Edgar Cohen, N. L. Cox, F. C. Curtis, Major Fletcher, Isobel Garner, W. J. Hodgetts, G. H. Ince, F. Llewellyn Jones, D. Mintzman, Lucy F. Morland, R.B.P., "Rigel."

To correspondents.—I much appreciate the many interesting letters I have received. Some are still unanswered, owing to pressure of work; all will be answered in due course.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

UPRIGHTS.

"At *One* will be settled the future of *Two*";
We have yet to discover how far this is true.

LIGHTS.

(1) A fruit, or a girl, or a colour am I—
Or a mild exhortation to those who would die.
(2) Just one indication sufficient should be—
I'd a combative brother exactly like me!
(3) I begin in rotation; I end at a pinch;
You'll find me at table—why, friends, it's a cinch.
(4) We're some sort of chemicals, are we? Oh no:
We were up at the 'Varsity, long time ago.
(5) Long time ago, too, I was "placed" in my class—
It's now just a matter of honours or pass.
(6) The law is an ass? Well—to cut the tale short—
One looms into view in this old-fashioned Court.

CALIBAN.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE FLIGHT FROM THE DOLLAR AND TO THE POUND—KREUGER AND TOLL ALARMS—"COSACH" AND CHILE

IT has been suggested that the dollar will not be safe until the kidnapped Lindbergh baby is returned. There is some truth in this fantasy, for until gangster-rule is eliminated and corruption driven out of high political places, the credit of America will be regarded with the utmost cynicism in Europe. The dollar will not be safe just because Congress finally settles down to balance the Federal budget. The declaration by the Speaker of the House of Representatives that if the budget were unbalanced there would not be a bank in the United States within sixty days which could meet its depositors, is not calculated to increase foreign confidence in the financial stability of America. No, the dollar will be saved only if French depositors decide to save it. The French banks know well enough that if they were to withdraw their New York deposits in a hurry, they would precipitate such a panic that the dollar would be "off" gold within a few days. They were taught a lesson in London, for the too panicky flight from the pound involved them finally in heavy exchange losses. It is significant that in spite of the nervousness on Tuesday, when forward dollars were extremely weak, the spot rate in Paris remained above gold import point. This suggests that the Bank of France has the situation well in hand, and is fully determined to keep America on the gold standard. We must be grateful to the Bank of France, because the last thing we desire to see is an uncontrolled inflation in America of the German variety. What we want is a controlled inflation in the gold standard countries, bringing up the gold prices of commodities immediately to the level where they stood before gold went "off" the sterling standard last autumn.

* * *

There is, unfortunately, no reason to suppose that, even if the dollar is saved by France, the flight to the £ will not continue. The discount on forward dollars gives a handsome profit to the American financier who wishes to employ his money for three months in sterling Treasury Bills. French as well as American money is also being poured into London, for there is as little confidence in France as there is in the United States. Before long we shall find ourselves again at the mercy of short-term French money. Apart from the adverse effect upon our export trade if the pound is pushed over $4.00, it would be very undesirable to be subject to French monetary influence again on the eve of an important Disarmament Conference. There is, therefore, a strong demand in the City for a firm Government policy. It is suggested that the Government should make up its mind quickly to stabilise at $3.80 or even at $4.00, and should then buy any amount of foreign currency if the rate goes above that level. The more foreign currencies it buys above the agreed rate, the more profit it makes on stabilisation. Unfortunately, the Government has declared that it cannot make up its mind until the reparations problem and other problems have been settled, and for all we know it may be waiting for the return of the Lindbergh baby. The only wise policy—an absolute renunciation of the gold standard—is the one which the Government will not consider at any time.

* * *

It was hardly necessary for the Committee which is investigating the affairs of Kreuger and Toll to issue the preliminary statement that "the Company's position is untenable and that the assets, in the event of liquidation through bankruptcy, bearing in mind the amount for which under present conditions they could be sold, cannot with certainty be said to be sufficient to cover the Company's total obligations." No one imagined the Company to be immediately solvent. A financier does not usually commit suicide if his company can look its bankers in the face. Compulsory liquidation would, of course, be fatal to Kreuger and Toll shareholders and participating-debenture holders, having regard to the terrific depreciation in the market values of the Company's foreign Government bonds and permanent shareholdings (including 500,000 shares of Swedish Match). Compulsory liquidation would be equally fatal to the ordinary shareholders of many post-war British investment trusts, whose depreciated assets, if realised in the market, would be insufficient to pay off debenture and preferred stock-holders. Yet the ordinary stocks of these investment trusts, with a break up value of nil, are valued on the Stock Exchange at a fair price because they are earning and will continue to earn dividends. What the shareholder and participating-debenture holder of Kreuger and Toll would like to know is whether the Company, if granted a sufficiently long moratorium and perhaps reconstructed, can again earn dividends, or whether its assets have been improperly or irregularly dissipated. Lee Higginson, the Company's American bankers, have declared that the investigating Committee's preliminary conclusions are at variance with the statement made by Mr. Kreuger to them on January 28th, 1932, and with the interim profit statement issued last autumn. It seems very undesirable for the Committee to hint at irregularities without making a definite charge based upon figures and facts. Some consternation has been caused by the publication in New York of a revised list of the collateral behind the $50,000,000 Kreuger and Toll 5 per cent. Secured Debentures. According to the prospectus of March, 1929, there were originally pledged Government bonds of Jugo-Slavia, Poland, Ecuador, Greece, Rumania, Germany and Hungary together with $13½ millions of French rentes and $2¼ millions of Belgian National Railways participating preferred stock. The two last have now been removed *en bloc* from the list and Jugo-Slavian and other bonds substituted. But this is entirely in keeping with the terms of the prospectus. It was provided that the collateral could be changed about provided the par value of the total bonds deposited was equal to 120 per cent. of the par value of the 5 per cent. Secured Debentures and the total income equal to 120 per cent. of the Debenture interest requirements. If insinuations against the integrity of Ivar Kreuger are to be made on this sort of evidence, it does no one any good. The present depreciation in the market values of the Kreuger and Swedish Match Securities beats anything we have yet seen in market tragedies :—

	High 1929.	High 1931.	Present.	Depreciation from 1929.
Swedish Match, B	24 15/16	13¾	1¾	93%
Kreuger and Toll, B	42¾	27¼	⅜	99%
Kreuger and Toll 5% Secured Debs.	105	99	20	81%

Since 1929, the total depreciation in the Swedish Match shares has been £82.6 millions and in Kreuger and Toll shares and debentures £129.7 millions—a total market loss of £212.3 millions.

* * *

For anyone who likes to see tidiness in a financial house, life to-day must be hell. The whole world is strewn with financial messes. One of the worst is in Chile, and a new conference is about to be held in New York at which Chilean, American and British delegates will consider how the finances of the Chilean Nitrate Company ("Cosach") are to be improved. "Cosach" was formed last year to take over practically the whole of the Chilean nitrate industry and to work the Guggenheim process of nitrate extraction. This meant, in effect, operating for the present only the two Guggenheim companies—Anglo-Chilean and Lautaro—whose plants, with a capacity of 1,350,000 tons, were considered adequate to cope with the reduced level of exports (1930 exports were over 2,000,000 tons). But the slump in nitrate is so serious that even these Guggenheim plants will not be fully employed. Chile, whose internal economy depended upon a movement of goods and labour to the copper mines and nitrate grounds, is absolutely paralysed. And the Government is bankrupt because it made over its reserve nitrate lands to "Cosach" and surrendered its 50s. per ton export duty in return for £4,500,000 cash, $40,000,000 in 7 per cent. secured bonds, and 50 per cent. of the "Cosach" shares. I understand that it has not received the full amount of its cash and is not likely to see any bond issue of $40,000,000 at the present time. Nor will it get any dividends from its shares seeing that "Cosach" is heavily over-capitalised with $200,000,000 of funded debt and $39,000,000 of Lautaro prior charges. The indignation felt in Chile is naturally acute. The old Government is accused of having sold the country to the Guggenheim Brothers for a mess of pottage. The fact that a Guggenheim loan to Anglo-Chilean of over £5,500,000 was taken over by "Cosach" as part of its first charges made the name of Guggenheim stink all the more in the nostrils of patriotic Chileans. Every vested interest will have to take less plunder out of "Cosach." It will be interesting to see whether the bankers have the power to close down nitrate operations entirely in order that stocks may be liquidated—while the Chileans live on nothing.

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GAIETY.	HOLD MY HAND.	Wed. & Sat.
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QUEEN'S.	CARAVAN.	Sat., April 9.
ST. MARTIN'S.	PRECIOUS BANE.	Tu., Fri.
SAVOY.	OLD MAN MURPHY.	Thurs., Sat.
STRAND.	IT'S A GIRL.	Wed., Thurs.
WESTMINSTER.	TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL.	Wed., Sat.
WYNDHAM'S.	THE GREEN PACK.	Wed. Sat.

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All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. The Postage on this issue is: Inland, 1d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canada, 1d.

THE Anglo-French conversations are over, and the Four Power Conference on the Danube plan is sitting as we write. Mr. MacDonald has not been nobbled by M. Tardieu, and those optimists in France, who thought that he was going to be, are now making the best of the visit by saying that it helped to produce a better understanding in London of the French aims. We daresay it did. We hope also that it helped the French to see the necessity of adapting their aims and their plans to the general interest. What the Four Power Conference will effect remains to be seen. Italy and Germany have both to be converted to the scheme of relief in any form in which it has yet been put forward, and the five Danubian States themselves are not agreed about anything except the necessity of assistance for the bankrupts. Loans to Austria and to Hungary seem to be imperative. But the City—and presumably the French bankers too—may want Government guarantees for these; everybody will want some international control and nobody is quite clear what shape it should take. As for the proposal of a tariff union with a 10 per cent. preference inside, this presents obvious objections both to the Danubian countries, or some of them, and to their customers outside. Switzerland and Poland as well as Germany and Italy are vitally concerned in this question. And Bulgaria and Greece, which are not included among the Danubian States, are as urgently in need of help as any of them, as the recently published report of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations has shown.

* * *

Side by side with the decision to ban the annual session of the Indian Congress come terrible reports of the "irregularities" now occurring in India under the rule of the Ordinances. Very few of these reports appear in the daily press in this country. The American public are more fully informed and the accounts given by visitors to India and by private letter from Indians and Englishmen in India form altogether a body of evidence which cannot be ignored. One practice bitterly complained of by English men and women who have seen it in operation is the use of a "cat-and-mouse" system. Political prisoners—often respectable persons of moderate views—are released on condition that they report at frequent intervals to the police. In many cases they are told to report within a few hours of their release. Conscious of no offence, they refuse to give their word, do not report and are then re-arrested and given long sentences, not as political prisoners but as ordinary criminals. Savage lathi beatings are reported daily and there are well-authenticated instances of prisoners being marched about in heavy chains. An inquiry might prove that some of the more shocking stories—we shall await with interest the inquiry into the alleged stripping and flogging of women reported by the *Daily Herald* correspondent in Bombay—are exaggerated, but exaggerations are as inevitable under a system of censorship as